

## Lebanese civilian wounded in Israeli shelling

MARIAYOUN (AP) — A 70-year-old Lebanese civilian was wounded Monday in Israeli shelling that was sparked by a guerrilla attack on an Israeli position in southern Lebanon. Lebanese security officials said the civilian, Mohammad Fayad, was lightly wounded by shrapnel when a shell crashed near his home in Majdel Zouni, a Shiite Muslim village. The village is 40 kilometres south-west of Marjayoun. He was the first civilian injured in the south this year. An Israeli soldier was wounded in a guerrilla attack on New Year's Day. The shelling from Israeli gun batteries apparently was in retaliation for a guerrilla attack on an Israeli radar post near the village. Hizbollah said its fighters fired rockets and machine guns on the Israeli outpost "scoring direct hits." The security officials said there were no reports of Israeli casualties from the early morning attack. They spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

## Jordan Times

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## Weakened Netanyahu wins approval of 1998 budget despite loss of Gesher

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The weakened coalition government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won parliamentary approval of its 1998 austerity budget Monday despite the loss of a key ally.

The 120-member Knesset or parliament adopted the \$59 billion budget in its final reading by a vote of 58 to 52 with one abstention. Other deputies were absent during the vote.

It was the first test for the coalition since Foreign Minister David Levy and four other deputies of his centrist Gesher Party quit the government Sunday to protest the budget's cuts in social welfare spending and the deadline in the peace process with the Palestinians.

Mr. Levy voted against the budget, officials in parliament said. Earlier reports on Israel Radio said he had left prior to the vote.

Analysts cautioned that Monday's Knesset victory was no indication of how Mr. Netanyahu's coalition will fare in future, especially when later this month it was due to decide on a long-promised new troop withdrawal from the West Bank which is fiercely opposed by many government deputies.

The budget vote was delayed for days while Mr. Netanyahu wrangled with

coalition partners over demands for extra spending on various pet projects.

To garner support for the budget, he agreed to \$300 million in extra spending to subsidise ultra-Orthodox religious institutions and students, Jewish settlers and various health programs.

But Finance Minister Yacov Neeman insisted Monday that funds to meet such promises would be found within the budget and that the government would respect its target of bringing the budget deficit down to 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product, from 2.8 per cent last year.

Shortly before Monday's vote, however, Mr. Netanyahu announced that he would submit a supplemental budget of about \$100 million to provide funds for disadvantaged towns — one of Mr. Levy's key demands.

Mr. Netanyahu did not specify how he would finance the additional spending, saying only that it would not require new taxes.

Following the defection of Mr. Levy and his Gesher Party, Mr. Netanyahu's seven-party coalition has only a one-seat majority in parliament and is dominated by far-right hardliners opposed to further territorial concessions to the Palestinians.

## Most Israelis want elections after Levy resignation — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Most Israelis want early elections following the weekend defection of Foreign Minister David Levy and his centrist party from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, according to an opinion poll published Monday.

Sixty-two per cent of respondents said Mr. Levy's resignation on Sunday over budget and peace issues was "justified." Of those questioned, 58 per cent said they favoured holding elections for parliament and prime minister before their scheduled date in 2000, according to the poll published in the Yediot Ahronot newspaper.

Of those who supported Mr. Levy's decision, 78 per cent said that if elections for prime minister were held today, they would vote for former Labour Party leader Shimon Peres, while only 44 per cent said they would vote for Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu narrowly defeated Mr. Peres for the prime minister's post in May 1996 elections.

The survey did not ask about the chances of current Labour leader Ehud Barak to beat Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Barak led Mr. Netanyahu 42 per cent to 28 per cent in a survey two weeks ago, lead-

ing Israeli pollster Hanoch Smith said.

The resignation of Mr. Levy and defection of his Gesher Party, which had five deputies in parliament, means Mr. Netanyahu's ruling coalition has a majority of only one in the 120-member parliament.

While most analysts expected Mr. Netanyahu to gain parliamentary approval Monday for his 1998 austerity budget, it was widely believed the government could not survive deep internal divisions over whether to cede more territory to the Palestinians as required under U.S.-backed peace accords.

Mr. Smith said Mr. Netanyahu, with his "great improvisational tactics," may be able to avoid early elections.

"Netanyahu is walking on a tightrope but he may, through delaying tactics, be able to manage the troop withdrawal and make it through," Mr. Smith told AFP.

If elections are held within three months, the conservative Israeli public will not necessarily vote that differently than in the previous election which brought Mr. Netanyahu to power, Mr. Smith added.

"This is not a revolutionary situation," Mr. Smith said.

For Monday's vote, Mr. Netanyahu was also able to count on the support of two deputies from the far-right Moledet party who agreed to back the budget after Mr.

Netanyahu promised additional funds for Jewish settlers.

Mr. Levy announced his resignation Sunday, saying he was "fed up" with Mr.

Netanyahu's ultra-liberal economic policies, political manoeuvring and failure to advance the peace process with the Palestinians.

## Kingdom not participating but sending one observer to Reliant Mermaid — Tarawneh

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan, keen to fend off growing criticism at home and abroad over its participation in Israeli-Turkish-U.S. naval exercises said on Monday it was only sending one official to "observe" the manoeuvres.

"We are not participating... So we have to use the right terminology. We are sending one observer to the exercises," Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh told reporters.

He said Jordan took a "sovereign decision" to attend the exercises code-named "Reliant Mermaid" because "we read it as manoeuvres or exercises for search and rescue operations."

Iran, late on Sunday joined Syria, Iraq and Egypt in criticising Jordan for attending the exercises, held in Israeli territorial waters and international airspace from Monday to Friday.

The Arab League on Sunday denounced the exercises, part of an Israeli-Turkish mil-

itary cooperation accord signed in 1996, as harmful to the Middle East peace process.

Critics see the wargames as designed to help the Jewish state increase its influence in the region.

Dr. Tarawneh said Jordan had explained its position to its Arab neighbours in "a loud and clear" manner.

"If there are other parties of different views we respect this. But they have to read and understand exactly why we are sending this [observer]," said Dr. Tarawneh.

"The invitation is to observers," he said. "That means they are inviting others to basically come and see the objectives for these exercises and we are sending one observer for that purpose."

Turkey and Israel maintain that the sole purpose of the exercise is for joint training in search and rescue operations and say it is no threat to anyone.

Many leftist Jordanian political parties, deputies and newspaper columnists have

condemned Amman's decision to send the commander of the Jordanian Naval Forces, Rear Admiral Hussein Khassawneh, to the exercises.

Members of the Lower House of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee held a closed-door meeting with Dr. Tarawneh on Sunday to seek clarification on Jordan's participation in the manoeuvres.

The minister said he briefed them on the reasons that prompted Jordan to send an observer to the exercise.

However, Lower House Deputy Mohammad Bani Hani is expected to question Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, also defence minister, during the house's bi-weekly session on Tuesday.

In a written question to Dr. Majali, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times, Mr. Bani Hani charged that Jordan's participation in the exercises "harms our relations with neighbouring Arab states."

"These manoeuvres will

increase Israel's obstinacy towards Arab rights in Palestine and will increase Turkey's challenge to Arab and Muslim feelings."

Jordan's Communist Party said in a statement issued on Monday that the exercises were a "direct threat" to Iraq and Syria.

"Jordan's participation is an unjustified submission to American-Israeli pressures that will worsen the Kingdom's ties with Arabs at a time when it should extend extra efforts to enhance them," read the statement.

The Arabic-language daily Arab Al Yawm urged the government on Monday to reverse its decision.

"Is it in the interest of Jordan and Jordanians to attend something that was rejected by all Arabs and is seen by them as a direct challenge?" it asked.

"The time is not over yet," it said. "The government can take a breath, review its decision, and recall the Jordanian observer."

## Butler prepares for new Baghdad mission

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Top U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler is preparing for a new mission to Baghdad to insist on full access for his monitors in Iraq, a spokesman said Monday.

U.N. Special Commissioner Ewen Buchanan told AFP that Mr. Butler, an Australian diplomat who heads UNSCOM, planned to leave New York on Jan. 15 for the talks in Baghdad expected to take place on Jan. 19 and 20.

Mr. Buchanan said that the main issue at the meetings would be Baghdad's continued refusal to allow the U.N. inspectors into so-called presidential and sovereign sites.

U.N. resolutions call for unconditional, total and immediate access to all Iraqi sites suspected of containing proscribed weaponry and related materiel.

Seven-year-old U.N. sanctions, imposed after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, can only be lifted when UNSCOM certifies that all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction have been dismantled.

But Iraqi President Saddam Hussein triggered a three-week showdown over the inspections by carrying out a threat to expel U.S. weapons monitors, and the access issue has still not been resolved.

At Mr. Butler's last meeting in Baghdad with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, during a mission from Dec. 12-16, the two renegotiated guidelines governing so-called sensitive sites connected to Iraq's national security.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan receives Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek on Monday. Prince Hassan and his guest discussed means to overcome obstacles facing the peace process and bilateral ties (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

## Crown Prince, Vollebaek discuss ways to overcome peace obstacles

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan held talks on Monday with the Foreign Minister of Norway, Knut Vollebaek, on the latest developments in the peace process and means of overcoming obstacles facing it.

The two sides stressed the need to exert all possible efforts to put the process back on track in order to move forward towards the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

During the meeting, which was attended by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Prince Hassan and Mr. Vollebaek also discussed bilateral relations and means of improving them.

In a statement to Norwegian and Jordanian television stations after the meeting, Prince Hassan urged a resumption in concern towards addressing outstanding agreements with the Palestinians.

"There is slippage [in the peace process] and this is why I think the presence of the Norwegian foreign minister at this time in the region is important," Prince Hassan said.

The Crown Prince said that while there must be progress on life-giving issues like the safe passage and the Gaza airport for the Palestinians, the most important matter is Israeli troop redeployment in Palestinian territories.

"Life-giving issues like safe passage and the airport are important issues of concern to the Palestinians and are issues which have to be presented. There has to be some give on these issues," Prince Hassan said.

"But the most important issue is clearly further redeployment not on the basis of maps and fair accompli but on the basis of identifying the shared interest of the two communities in developing a zone of stability in terms of Palestinian identity," he said.

Prince Hassan said the peace process must result in the establishment of a Palestinian state. "We would like to see the process move forward to an ultimate conclusion of creating a Palestinian state on the Palestinian soil," the Crown Prince said.

Prince Hassan also said the time-out the United States has called for should mean a restraint on unilateral actions and not a breakdown of the negotiations.

"If the time-out that the United States has sought is one of

restraint over unilateral actions, changes on the ground and settlements and so forth, then I can understand that this is a time-out that will contribute to peace," Prince Hassan said.

But "if time-out means the breakdown of the whole system of negotiations and putting the peace agenda in limbo as far as the Israeli government is concerned, then I think we are living a very dangerous period where only extremists can benefit," he said.

Responding to a question, Prince Hassan said developments in Israel, including the resignation of Foreign Minister David Levy, "should not be at the expense of the Israeli government's commitment to giving momentum to the peace process in the short weeks ahead, especially that there has already been slippage on so many issues and so much time wasted."

Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's long-standing policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of others but stressed that no developments should lead to a point where the prime minister of Israel would not do what is right "and what is right is making peace."

## Levy's resignation could result in further stalemate — Norwegian FM

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and Norway said on Monday the resignation of Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy could further complicate stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Mr. Levy submitted his resignation on Sunday after denouncing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 19-month-old government for abandoning the peace process and ignoring rising problems of Israel's poor.

"The present situation in Israel is problematic to the peace process," Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek told reporters after talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and his Jordanian counterpart, Fayez Tarawneh.

"I think it is worrisome," he said. "In terms of political problems in Israel now, [the resignation], could create a further stalemate, a further delay in any kind of re-deployment from the occupied territories."

Dr. Tarawneh, standing next to the Norwegian guest, added that the "crisis" caused by Mr. Levy's resignation, would delay peace making between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority for at least six months.

Mr. Vollebaek's country hosted secret talks between

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that resulted in a 1993 declaration of principles in Oslo.

A series of agreements followed the "Oslo process" creating self-rule for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank. But implementation ground to a halt after Mr. Netanyahu took office in May 1995.

Mr. Vollebaek, who met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the region in November, said Norway would continue efforts to bring the peace process back on track.

"We see the Oslo accord as the basis for the peace process... We have told the Israelis and the Palestinians the same thing," added the Norwegian minister, who arrived in Amman on Saturday on the first leg of a Middle East tour.

"I think that at this stage, the Americans will have to play a pivotal role while our role at present will be to support the American effort," Mr. Vollebaek said.

"But having been instrumental in the past, Norway feels a moral obligation to pursue this path and do whatever we can in order to be helpful," he added.

Mr. Vollebaek, who is due to leave for Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas later on Monday, praised His Majesty King Hussein's "instrumental" role in regional peace making.

Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1994.

He said Oslo wanted to develop bilateral ties with Jordan, especially in the economic sphere.

In 1995, the Norwegian giant Alcatel won a \$75 million deal to extend an underwater electricity cable link between Egypt and Jordan via Aqaba.

"Now we have a Norwegian company, Nordic Hydro, the largest producer of fertilisers, which is interested in getting into a joint venture with Jordan," added Mr. Vollebaek.

The company is conducting a feasibility study on the \$600 million project, he added.

If the joint project kicks off, it will be a "major investment that will create about 1,000 job opportunities," he said.

Mr. Vollebaek said he discussed plans with Jordanian officials to support the operations of a U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees in the region, including Jordan.

Norway, one of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) major donors, has contributed about \$15 million towards the agencies 1998 budget.

He said Jordan had asked Norway to help it in clearing mines, planted during the 46-year state of war with Israel. Officials estimate there are some 350,000 unexploded mines in the Kingdom.



## 22 more slain in Algeria — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — Suspected Islamists massacred more than 20 Algerian civilians in weekend attacks, press reports said on Monday, less than a week into an already bloody Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Newspapers reported that armed men slaughtered at least 22 people on Sunday in the central northern region of Medea, at Saida and Tlemcen in the west, at M'Sila in the south and in the capital Algiers.

The private Al Watan daily, meanwhile, said 299 people were killed in a savage attack targeting three places in the western Relizane region on Dec. 30, giving a revised toll.

The newspaper Le Matin for its part reported that in one community alone, Kherbera, only two of 260 residents survived last Tuesday's slaughter.

The official toll from the massacres on the first day of the Muslim holy fasting month was put at 78, but initial press reports had given different figures, running as high as 412.

Ramadan is regarded as an auspicious month for jihad, or "holy war," by militants who began an uprising against the secular regime in 1992 after the cancellation of the second round of elections that Islamists were poised to win.

The virtual civil war has claimed at least 60,000 lives, according to Western estimates, but the human rights watchdog group Amnesty International has put the toll at 80,000.

Most victims have been civilians, including intellectuals, artists and women and schoolchildren held to be in breach of strict Islamic law, as well as whole communities.

On Sunday, Algeria's first upper house of parliament



Two armed municipal police check villagers sitting in the back of a pick-up with their belongings on the outskirts of Relizane, northwestern Algeria, Monday. The villagers escaped an attack by unidentified gunmen on Dec. 30, 1997, that left 412 massacred most of them women and children (Reuters photo)

was inaugurated, but opposition parties protested against what they called the "constitutional dictatorship" of President Liamine Zerroual.

The regime has pressed ahead with political and economic reforms in spite of the ongoing violence, routinely blamed on its Islamist foes.

At the weekend, Le Matin said seven people had their throats cut at a road checkpoint in the Medea region, where two were seriously injured. The Liberté daily put the death toll at three.

In Tlemcen, armed men abducted six people before killing them. In Saida, a teacher, his wife and son and a

domestic worker were among seven people slain. An armed gang sprayed a taxi with gunfire at M'Sila, killing the driver and three passengers.

Al Watan also said a mother and daughter were killed in the Birkhadem district of Algiers.

La Tribune reported that two other massacres were narrowly avoided after civil defence groups fought off attacks in the western regions of Mascara and Sidi Bel Abbas.

The government daily Al Moudjahid said that "terrorism is digging its own grave" by carrying out "genocidal operations," but several pri-

vate papers warned that the security situation has worsened since the start of Ramadan.

Monday's press reported an exodus of residents from the western mountain site of last week's slaughter, with about 1,000 local people moving nightly to gather for safety, while others had asked for weapons.

Le Matin said that last week, "a member of the district police said that his group alone had brought 75 bodies out of one hamlet. Another group, in the Remka district, stacked lorries with more than 115 bodies."

An elderly man, cited by the

pro-government daily L'Authentique, said that the "terrorists... slit the throats of almost 300 people."

The government daily expressed satisfaction at Sunday's adoption of an anti-terrorist pact by Arab League interior ministers, who unanimously agreed in Tunis to cooperate across the Arabic-speaking world.

The pact, sought notably by Algeria and Egypt, covers the extradition of extremists and wanted or convicted terrorists and calls on Arab countries "not to allow terrorist groups to use their territories to plan or sponsor attacks" in other Arab countries.

## Hundreds attend memorial for slain Hamas bombmaker

HEBRON (AFP) — The wife of slain Hamas bombmaker Yahya Ayyash urged the Islamist group to continue in his path of anti-Israeli attacks, during a rally in the West Bank town of Hebron on Monday.

Some 1,500 supporters of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) attended the rally in Hebron's polytechnic building to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of Ayyash, presumably by Israeli agents.

To mark the arrival of Ayyash's wife, father, and children at the rally, 10 masked activists blew up a

model Israeli bus, the favourite target of Ayyash's bombings, and burned Israeli and American flags.

"Yahya kept his promise to you, and now you must vow to continue in his path," his wife, known as Um Bara'a, told the crowd, which chanted, "Ayyash, our love, blow up Tel Aviv."

Ayyash, considered by Israel as Hamas's chief bombmaker for his role in bus bombings which killed 45 people, was slain on Jan. 5, 1996, by a booby-trapped portable phone presumably slipped to him by Israeli agents.

His murder led to a spate

of bus bombings by Hamas which along with a wave of Islamic Jihad bombings killed 58 people in early 1996.

Hamas, which has rejected Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's peace deals with Israel, has led a campaign of anti-Israeli violence which has slain scores of people since 1993.

But it has been subjected to a heavy crackdown by Israel and a wave of arrests by the Palestinian National Authority since a pair of bombings in Jerusalem which killed 21 people in July and September.

## 4 Qataris accused of spying freed on bail

DOHA (AP) — A court hearing an espionage case against seven Qataris released four of them on bail early Monday.

The men went on trial last month in a case apparently linked to a failed 1996 coup attempt. The accused, who had been in detention for more than 18 months, pleaded innocent.

After the most recent hearing, which began Sunday and continued into the early hours of Monday morning, four of the seven suspects were released on bail of \$2,674 each, the Peninsula newspaper reported Monday.

The English-language daily did not say why just four of the seven were granted bail. A verdict in the case is expected Jan. 24, the paper

said. Defence lawyers have said the case is linked to the failed February 1996 plot to topple the emir of Qatar, but they have not given details.

In November, Qatar put some 110 people on trial for the coup plot. Forty of the accused are being tried in absentia, including the former interior minister, Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani, who is thought to be living in France. That trial has been adjourned to Feb. 11.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani ousted his father, Sheikh Khalifa, in a bloodless coup in 1995. The government has indirectly accused Sheikh Khalifa, 65, as being behind the coup attempt.

## Iran arrests suspected spies

TEHRAN (AP) — Authorities have arrested seven people in the town of Khorramshahr in south-eastern Iran on suspicion of spying, a state-run Iran daily reported Monday.

The English-language newspaper said the group's leader, identified as Fahd Sultan, claimed to be a Kuwaiti national and that the others were Iranians. The paper said Mr. Sultan remained in custody but that the Iranians had been freed on bail.

The report did not say which country the group allegedly spied for.

The arrests occurred last week in Khorramshahr, which is close to the border with Iraq, Iran's foe in the 1980-88 war.

Iran routinely reports the arrests of suspected spies, usually linked to Iraq, which Tehran has accused of carrying out acts of sabotage.

In a separate report, the paper said that border guards arrested an 18-year-old sympathiser of the Iraq-based Mujahideen Khalq, the largest Iranian opposition group.

It said the teenager, identified only as Abdul-lah, was trying to sneak across the border from Ilam province to join the group.

Since March, 10 people have been arrested trying to cross the border to join the group, the paper said.

It said Mujahideen radio and television broadcasts advise sympathisers who want to join the group that the 130-kilometre border that runs along Ilam province is the best place to cross the frontier.

## Israel must withdraw from south Lebanon without conditions — Berri

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri on Monday said Israel must unconditionally withdraw from south Lebanon to conform to a 1978 U.N. resolution and rejected Israel's

demands for security guarantees.

"Resolution 425 stipulates an unconditional Israeli withdrawal and does not envision any security arrangements other than the armistice accord" which

ended the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Mr. Berri said.

He said he "feared" that the aim of the Israeli government in publicly accepting the 20-year-old resolution this week is "to separate the Lebanese and Syrian peace

tracks."

Israel publicly accepted the resolution for the first time on Sunday but insisted any pullout must be accompanied by security guarantees.

"Israel is ready to accept

Resolution 425 provided that it is possible to reach an agreement with Lebanon which will ensure the security procedures required by Israel," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"Of course a unilateral withdrawal is out of the

question," he added.

Mr. Berri, who also heads the Shiite Amal movement, said the acceptance of the resolution by Israel 20 years on was "a positive [development] due to the action of the anti-Israeli resistance in

south Lebanon."

Israel occupies a self-declared "security" zone in south Lebanon to protect its northern territory from attacks by anti-Israeli guerrillas, notably Hizbollah, but also the pro-Syrian Amal.

## S. Arabia proposes non-prison punishments in GCC countries

KUWAIT (AP) — Saudi Arabia has proposed that the Arab states in the Gulf consider adopting non-prison sentences — such as charity work or study of Islam's Holy Book, the Koran — for some crimes.

The official Kuwait news agency on Monday quoted Mohammad Al Ansari, a senior official in Kuwait's justice ministry, as saying the crimes for which alternative punishments could apply "have not been determined yet."

The ruler of Dubai, one of the seven semi-autonomous

states that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE), recently promised to pardon prisoners who memorise the Koran. The amnesty was open to prisoners convicted of non-violent crimes.

Mr. Ansari said that some of the alternatives to prison terms could be community work for charitable institutions or memorising the Koran. Other possibilities could include flogging or abandonment by a husband of a woman convicted of a crime.

He said a committee from

the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been set up to study the proposal.

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE in a confederation for economic and political cooperation.

Some of the countries impose strict Islamic punishments such as beheading, flogging and the severing of limbs. They have been harshly criticised by Western human rights organisations on grounds that the penalties are too severe.

## Iraqi opposition says Saddam's son Qussay ordered attack on U.N. offices

DUBAI (AFP) — The younger son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered Friday's rocket attack on the U.N. operations centre in Baghdad, the London-based Iraqi opposition claimed on Monday.

"Qussay, the dictator's son and chief of his security services, ordered the rocket attack on the headquarters of the U.N. Special Commission on disarming Iraq" (UNSCOM), said the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a coalition of Iraqi opposition groups.

Iraq has condemned the rocket attack as "an act of sabotage" to destroy the already poor relations between Baghdad and the United Nations. The attack late Friday did not cause any casualties, and U.N. weapons experts based at the targeted building, which is a former hotel, continued their inspections.

The U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, Denis Halliday, said it only damaged a security checkpoint outside the building and broke a window in the basement cafeteria. The INC said that Qussay

met with four associates on Dec. 23 and "ordered them to carry out an attack against the UNSCOM building for the purpose of intimidating and frightening the inspectors without causing any injury or loss of life."

According to the INC, which quoted "reliable sources," the attack against UNSCOM was carried out by commander Alaa Al Takriti, a close associate of Qussay, "with a group of seven individuals."

The INC said the assailants fired a rocket-propelled

grenade at the building from "200 metres away" before escaping in a "maroon Oldsmobile vehicle."

It added that "Qussay awarded the members of the attacking unit \$850 each" and twice that amount to the officers in charge of the operation.

The attack was the second in three months against U.N. offices in Baghdad and came at a time when relations between Iraq and UNSCOM inspectors are tense over Iraq's refusal to allow weapons experts to search presidential sites.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 ..... Sandokan  
14:30 ..... French Programmes  
16:15 Prayers — Believe and Behave  
17:00 ..... Skippy  
17:30 ..... Square One TV  
18:00 ..... Gillette Sports  
18:30 ..... News Headlines  
18:35 ..... A Whole New Ballgame  
19:00 ..... News in French  
19:35 ..... Black Hat Chef  
20:00 ..... What Would You Do?  
20:30 ..... Encounter  
21:10 ..... Hollywood Remembers  
22:00 ..... News in English  
23:30 ..... Marguerite Volant  
23:15 Feature film: "In Broad Daylight"  
23:59 Islam in a Changing World

#### PRAYER TIMES

05:10 ..... Fajr  
06:32 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
11:41 ..... Dhuhur  
14:27 ..... 'Asr  
16:51 ..... Maghreb  
18:13 ..... 'Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

### JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**ment of Meteorology**  
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly but remaining cool during the day. Skies will be partly cloudy to sunny and winds variable occasionally becoming westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

**Amman** ..... 06/12  
Aqaba ..... 09/19  
Deserts ..... 04/13  
Jordan Valley ..... 10/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 10, Aqaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 90 per cent, Aqaba 68 per cent.

**NIGHT DUTY**  
AMMAN:  
Dr. Issam Al Asmar ..... 800504  
Dr. Youssef Nasser ..... 751144  
Dr. Khalidoun Kloub ..... 816715  
Dr. Nidal Al Jas'ad ..... 751672  
Ferdous pharmacy ..... 778336  
Al Asema pharmacy ..... 637055  
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730

**EMERGENCIES**  
Food Control Centre ..... 637111  
Civil Defence Dept ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police 192 ..... 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Department ..... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water and Sewerage Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone

**HOSPITALS**  
AMMAN:  
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity ..... 644281/6  
Akileh Maternity ..... 642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity ..... 642362  
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 607071  
Shmeisani Hospital ..... 669131  
University Hospital ..... 845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 6641646  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3  
Al-Bashir ..... 775111/26  
Army, Marka ..... 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

**Repairs** ..... 623101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101  
Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority ..... 815615  
Electric Power Company 636381  
RJ Flight Information 0853200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

**Amal Hospital** ..... 674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 865199  
ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323  
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (09)990990  
IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555  
London (BA) ..... (02)275555  
Greek Catholic Hospital ..... (02)272275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital ..... (02)247100

#### FOR THE TRAVELLER

##### QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

###### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
06:15 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
07:15 ..... Sanaa (RJ)  
07:15 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
09:25 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
16:20 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

###### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
05:00 ..... Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
06:20 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
07:35 ..... Colombo (add) (RJ)  
08:25 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Vienna (add) (RJ)  
12:00 ..... Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:10 ..... Paris (RJ)

#### Other Flights

12:15 ..... London (RJ)  
12:30 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:30 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
13:55 ..... Madrid (RJ)  
19:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
20:00 ..... Damascus, Larnaca (RJ)  
21:40 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

#### Other Flights

02:25 ..... Amsterdam (KL)  
03:00 ..... Athens (OA)  
15:40 ..... Munich (YP)  
15:45 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
17:30 ..... Rome (AZ)  
19:30 ..... Dubai (EK)  
21:20 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:40 ..... Cairo (MS)

#### Royal Wings (RW) Flights

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)  
08:15 ..... Aqaba (RW)  
09:30 ..... Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)  
17:55 ..... Tel Aviv (RW)  
20:30 ..... Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
21:50 ..... Aqaba (RW)





## Former Chinese president faces protests on first Hong Kong visit

HONG KONG (AFP) — Former Chinese President Yang Shangkun, widely held responsible for the military crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989, was welcomed here Monday with protests upon arrival for his first visit to Hong Kong.

Mr. Yang, 90, arrived here late Sunday from Shenzhen, southern China, in the fourth such trip by groups of retired Chinese leaders wanting a first-hand glimpse of life in Hong Kong after the July 1 return to Chinese rule.

Some 20 activists from the radical April Fifth movement led by Leung Kwok-Hung, staged a sit-in outside the Government House, the former residence of British governors, where Mr. Yang would be hosted at a luncheon by Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa.

However, more than 60 police officers dragged protesters off the gates amid yells for Mr. Yang to take responsibility for the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy student protests on the mainland, witnesses said.

No arrests were made.

Mr. Yang was already greeted upon his arrival by two members of the Free China Democratic group, with an overnight sit-in outside the official residence of

the state-run Xinhua news agency, where Mr. Yang was reported to be staying.

They decried Mr. Yang's visit to Hong Kong and called for him to return home.

Their protest turned into a

melee, when a European man tried to stop them because of the noise they were making, the local press said.

Meanwhile, activists from the Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic

Movement in China, set up to support the 1989 student-led protests in China, will also stage a march to the Government House later.

The alliance will also demand for the release of political prisoners in China and legal action against those responsible for the Tiananmen massacre.

They blame Mr. Yang for the June 4, 1989 massacre when soldiers fired on unarmed protesters in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

Mr. Yang's visit is considered by the Hong Kong government as "private" and no details of his activities have been released.

Mr. Yang, who stepped down from his post in 1992, had backed late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping in clamping down on pro-democracy protests in China in 1989.

Mr. Deng, who devised the "one country, two systems" formula under which Hong Kong is ruled, repeatedly expressed the desire to see the territory under Chinese rule but died last February, before the July 1 handover.

Other veteran leaders have visited Hong Kong in past months. In the past, they could not do so because Britain was the sovereign power.

### Hong Kong chief secretary on visit to Beijing

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chief Secretary Anson Chan left here Monday on her first visit to Beijing since Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule to brief Chinese leaders on the bird flu, which has claimed four lives here.

Ms. Chan told reporters that her visit, the first since the Special Administrative Region (SAR) government was established following the July 1 end of British rule, was to discuss "matters of mutual interest", including the bird flu. She said she would meet various officials including Chinese Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen who made a brief stopover in Hong Kong Friday after officiating at the launching of China's first diplomatic ties with South Africa.

Ms. Chan was invited to Beijing by Liao Hui, the director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs office.

"This will be a good opportunity for me to bring the vice premier up to date on what is happening in Hong Kong not only on the financial front but also on other issues."

"I'm sure he will be interested, for example, to hear what the latest is in the avian flu," she said.

In early December, Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa made his first official visit to Beijing since the handover, meeting with President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice Premiers Qian Qichen and Zhu Rongji.

Chinese leaders expressed confidence in the way Hong Kong was being run, and in particular how well the territory had weathered financial and stock market turmoil.

Under Beijing's "one country, two systems" policy, the Hong Kong SAR has autonomy to run its own affairs.

## King Sihanouk planning surprise departure from Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk was making preparations Monday for an unexpected departure from his troubled homeland later in the afternoon, palace sources and diplomats said.

The ailing 75-year-old monarch had not been scheduled to leave the country until the end of February or March for routine medical examinations in Beijing and reasons for an earlier departure were not immediately clear.

Nor was it clear if the king would actually leave but palace sources said the royal household belongings had been packed and were ready for a 3 p.m. (0800 GMT) departure by commercial aircraft.

The sources however could not confirm whether the king would leave and held out the possibility that he might change his mind at the last moment.

Diplomats, who for protocol reasons normally attend the monarch's arrivals and departures from Cambodia, said they were still trying to confirm whether the king would leave.

"We don't know yet, I guess we'll have to wait and see if he appears at the airport," said one Western diplomat.

Though the reasons for the possible departure were not known, preparations for it got underway as the king came in for heavy criticism over a decision to unilaterally grant a pardon to his son, deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, who effectively ousted the prince in July and is demanding that he stand trial on criminal charges, has attacked the decision as illegal and his supporters have warned of violence if the prince is granted a pardon.

King Sihanouk has grown increasingly disillusioned with the government over the past year and has repeatedly said he wants to abdicate.

At one point, after Prince Ranariddh was ousted, the king said only his Buddhist faith prevented him from committing suicide.

## Bomb alert forces landing of French jetliner

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — A French airliner flying from Nigeria to Paris was diverted to Marseille Monday after authorities received a bomb alert, police said.

An anonymous caller told Paris airport authorities there were a bomb aboard

the Air France Airbus. The

aircraft, flying from Lagos to Paris, Charles de Gaulle airport, touched down in Marseille at 4:45 a.m. (0345 GMT).

Police were combing the plane and the luggage for any sign of a bomb, police said.

The aircraft was diverted to Marseille after a bomb alert was received from an anonymous caller.

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## 'Pol Pot is not in China'

BEIJING (AFP) — The Chinese Foreign Ministry Monday denied Cambodian press reports that Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot had fled to China.

"The information which said the Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot had gone for medical treatment in Beijing is without foundation and is not true," a foreign ministry spokesman told AFP.

"It is well known that the Chinese government severed its links with the Khmer Rouge a long time ago," he added.

China backed the Maoist Khmer Rouge during its reign in Phnom Penh in the 1970s.

Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan said Sunday he had information that Pol Pot had left Cambodia but did not know where he had gone.

Meanwhile in Bangkok the Chinese embassy denied Monday any contact with the Khmer Rouge.

The head of Cambodia's resistance army General

Nhiek Bun Chhay was Thursday quoted by two Cambodian newspapers as saying Pol Pot fled to China last month to escape a possible war crimes tribunal.

The gravely ill former Khmer Rouge leader is said to be receiving medical treatment in Beijing.

But a press attaché with the Chinese embassy who refused to be identified "categorically" denied the report.

"We are based in Bangkok and we work on relations between Thailand and China, not with Cambodia," the diplomat told AFP.

In Phnom Penh, senior officials from the defense and interior ministries said Sunday they knew nothing of Pol Pot's alleged flight.

Pol Pot, 72, architect of the killing fields, presided over a reign of terror between 1975 and 1979 when an estimated two million Cambodians, or a quarter of the population, died from torture, hunger and disease.

## Cambodia delays again decision to expel Western journalist

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A decision in the case of a Western television correspondent threatened with expulsion from Cambodia for allegedly unfair reporting has been delayed until later this week, a senior government official said Monday.

Secretary of State for Information Khieu Kanharith said he would not decide until Thursday whether to sign an order making veteran Canadian journalist Ed Fitzgerald of Asia Business News (ABN) ineligible for a Cambodian visa.

"I have given Ed three more days," he said, referring to a deadline for Mr. Fitzgerald to apologise and issue corrections for reports that the government has deemed biased and incorrect.

Such an apology would rescind the order which was expected to have been signed last week but delayed until Monday after appeals on behalf of Mr. Fitzgerald from King Norodom Sihanouk and two international press watchdogs.

Khieu Kanharith, who in response to the appeals had already dropped an immediate expulsion order, said he decided on the new delay after meeting with a Canadian embassy official Monday morning to discuss the case.

"The meeting went well," he said. "The issue will be settled one way or another soon. It all depends on Ed."

Mr. Fitzgerald, 50, the dean of the foreign press corps in Phnom Penh, said he had still not been officially notified of any action against him and could not comment on the matter.

The government has taken issue with a 30-minute year in review programme Mr. Fitzgerald produced that was aired repeatedly on ABN in late December.

Among other things, the programme took a critical look at Cambodia's judicial system questioning whether it was truly fair and impartial by citing court cases which observers have deemed to be politically motivated.



Former Chinese president Yang Shangkun (right) and other Chinese officials leave Government House after having lunch with Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-Hwa (Reuters photo)

## Australia renewing efforts to seize fugitive's assets

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian government Monday said it would renew attempts to freeze and recover the assets of fugitive tycoon Christopher Skase amid criticism it had already bungled the operation.

Christopher Skase has been living in a luxury villa on the Spanish island of Majorca since fleeing Australia in 1991 to avoid legal proceedings following the collapse of his Qintex media and resorts empire.

He is thought to have moved about 10 million Australian dollars (\$6.5 million) out of Australia before leaving the country and to have been living off that money since.

Government investigators have reportedly traced the concealed assets after years of searching at a cost of more than one million dollars to taxpayers. Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone said Monday the government would try to freeze the assets and then bring them back to Australia to help pay off the debts incurred by the bankrupt Skase.

But Ms. Vanstone would not elaborate on the plans to pursue Christopher Skase's assets for fear it would jeopardise the operation.

Christopher Skase was one of Australia's most celebrated corporate high-fliers in the 1980s until the collapse of his empire after the 1987 stock market crash left a corporate debt of \$1.5 billion and personal debts of about \$172 million. He left Australia with his family soon afterwards and established his home in Majorca, rejecting demands he return home by pleading ill health.

A Spanish court at first granted Australia's request for his extradition. But the decision was overturned on appeal in 1994 and Christopher Skase has continued to live on the island resort since. Opposition spokesman Nick Bolkus accused the government of bungling the operation and betraying the Skase estate's justice by leaking information about the proceedings to the press.

Mr. Bolkus said media reports Monday had given Christopher Skase the warning he needed to shift his assets and hide them again. Those assets are worth more than \$50 million and include four properties in Majorca and the \$10 million he stockpiled before leaving Australia, Mr. Bolkus said.

Senator Vanstone had delayed signing documents to launch the legal action against Christopher Skase for a month.

"It's a bungle which I fear will have ramifications for the court proceeding against Christopher Skase," Mr. Bolkus told reporters.

"It would only take Christopher Skase just a matter of hours to be able to shift some of these assets from the relevant companies and that's what the minister's given him, the minister's given him time."

## New centrist alliance enters Indian election fray

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A new alliance of centrist Indian political parties is to be set up here Monday in a bid to stop Hindu nationalists from winning upcoming elections, a party official said.

Five parties, whose influence is limited to the country's north, east and west, will announce a "secular front" and field joint candidates in the February-March polls, said spokesman Ranjan Yadav.

The front will be the fourth significant bloc in the balloting, which analysts expect to produce a hung parliament.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), is being tipped to retain its position as the country's largest parliamentary party in the elections beginning Feb. 16 and ending March 7.

They are already being challenged by the once-dominant Congress, the country's oldest party, and the outgoing centre-left United Front coalition government, made up of more than a dozen disparate parties.

Ranjan Yadav told AFP the new alliance — which is likely to be in the running for around 150 of India's 545 parliamentary seats — would look to forge links with the Congress, which like the BJP is looking for pre-poll alliances nationwide.

Although badly fragmented among themselves, the three blocs challenging the BJP are bitterly opposed to the nationalist agenda, which

they say is sectarian.

The main leaders of the proposed "secular front" will be Laloo Prasad Yadav, a popular but corruption-tainted politician who broke away from Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's United Front last year, and Kashi Ram, who heads a party of Hindu "untouchables."

The alliance also includes Chandra Shekhar, India's prime minister from November 1990 to June 1991, and a breakaway faction of Hindu nationalists.

"We are coming together to prevent (Hindu) communal forces from coming to power," Ranjan Yadav said. "Our number one enemy is BJP."

"We consider the Congress as a secular party, and naturally our sympathies lie with that party. We will try our best to forge an electoral understanding with the Congress."

Some recent opinion polls have predicted a clear victory for the BJP and its growing allies.

Mr. Yadav, however, ridiculed the idea.

"The BJP myth is a creation of a section of the media," he said. "This is the usual propaganda tactic the BJP employs during every election."

In 1996, the BJP claimed 162 seats and won the support of around 30 allies, still leaving it well short of the 273 members needed for a majority. The Congress won around 140 seats, while the United Front commanded 180.

## 'Mexican government planned to arm paramilitary groups'

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — The Mexican government in 1994 had secret plans to crush the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas by arming paramilitary groups, a top Mexican weekly magazine said Sunday.

Proceso magazine said the recent massacre of peasants in the village of Acteal in Chiapas reflects this "strategy" mapped out by the defence ministry.

The military's goal was to cut the ties between the people and "the lawbreakers," said the weekly magazine, using the term employed by former President Carlos Salinas to refer to the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

Proceso said the nation's military intelligence services

were charged with "secretly organising certain segments of the civil population."

During the height of the uprising, Proceso said, military plans called for organising ranchers, small property owners and "highly patriotic individuals who would be employed in support of our operations."

Proceso said the Acteal killings "conforms to a specific counter-insurgency strategy" designed in October 1994 when the Defence Ministry was headed by General Antonio Riviello.

Some 45 Tzotzil Maya were massacred Dec. 22 by heavily armed paramilitary supporters of the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

The magazine's revelations

## Second SilkAir black box found buried in thick silt

JAKARTA (AFP) — The cockpit voice recorder of a SilkAir jetliner which crashed in the Musi River in South Sumatra last month has been found buried in thick silt at the bottom of the river, an official said Monday.

The recorder, one of two on board aeroplanes which are crucial for determining the cause of a crash, was found buried under 9.5 metres of silt at around 3:45 (0845 GMT) Sunday, said Enny, a staffer at the Search and Rescue Coordinating Centre in Palembang, South Sumatra.

She confirmed media reports that the recorder was found some five metres north of where the other recorder, the flight data recorder, had been found on Dec. 27.

The recorder was found the day before the Indonesian search and rescue team had been due to halt salvage operations Monday after the crash which killed all 104 passengers and crew on board. Enny said that any plans Monday to halt the salvage operation depended on the outcome of a meeting at the centre currently being held.

"It will all depend on the result of the meeting this morning," she said.

The voice recorder, which records voice communications and cockpit noise, was currently at the airport in Palembang, some 60 kilometres southeast of the crash site, Enny said.

It will be sent to the United States for decoding, joining the flight data recorder sent after the SilkAir Boeing 737-300 crashed into the Musi River on Dec. 19 on a flight from Jakarta to Singapore. Western Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Rosli Arsyad has said.

Salvage operations have so far found small fragments of the plane as well as two parts believed to be from the victims of the aircraft. The Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia private television broadcast said Monday that a Singaporean diver would continue to operate for an undetermined time.

## Queen wants to know what her subjects think about her family

LONDON (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II has asked the MORI public opinion institute to find out what the British public thinks about the royal family, the British press reported Monday.

Several representative groups have already been questioned by MORI and a full report is due to be handed to the queen shortly, the reports said.

The idea for the survey was "entirely the initiative of Buckingham Palace", a palace spokesman said.

"The palace has commissioned MORI to undertake some opinion research on its behalf so it can find out how it is perceived by the public and how it can ensure the royal family's work is suited to the interests and concerns of the

people," the spokesman said. He said several such surveys had been carried out in the past and the initiative had nothing to do with the death on Aug. 31 of Diana Princess of Wales.

Amid the grief triggered by the princess's death in a car crash in Paris, the queen was accused of being cold and aloof and of being out of touch with the people.



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## U.N. war crimes tribunal due to start 2nd trial

**THE HAGUE (AFP)** — The U.N. tribunal judging war crimes suspects from the Bosnian conflict begins its second trial this week when a former officer of the Bosnian Croat HVO militia comes before the court Tuesday.

Zlatko Aleksovski, 37, is accused of mistreating Muslim prisoners held at a detention camp in central Bosnia in 1993 during Muslim-Croat fighting at the height of the three and a half year war.

He is the first member of the HVO to face the U.N. Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia set up in 1993 to try those accused of crimes against humanity and genocide in Bosnia.

The first trial at The Hague was of Dusan Tadic, a Bosnian Serb soldier found guilty of atrocities in northern Bosnia and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Another soldier in the Bosnian Serb army, Dragan Erdemovic, was given a 10 year sentence after admitting being in an execution squad that killed dozens of Muslims in 1995.

Mr. Aleksovski was extradited to The Hague in July after being arrested by Croatian police earlier in the year. He pleaded not guilty to charges that he mistreated prisoners held in the Lasva Valley during 1993 when HVO forces expelled thousands of Muslims from their homes in a bloody blitz on villages and towns in the area that saw hundreds killed.

Mr. Aleksovski's original indictment included others allegedly involved in the atrocities. However Aleksovski, who is a Croatian citizen, has persuaded the court that he should be tried separately.



Valdas Adamkus celebrates his victory in the presidential election in his headquarters in Vilnius just after the electoral commission announced the latest results (Reuters photo)

## Former emigrant elected president of Lithuania

**VILNIUS (AFP)** — Valdas Adamkus, an anti-Communist emigrant who returned last year after decades of exile in the United States, has won a narrow victory in Lithuania's presidential election, the electoral commission said Monday.

The commission said all votes cast in Lithuania had been counted, leaving only results from Lithuanian expatriates still incomplete.

Mr. Adamkus won 49.9 per cent of the vote while Arturas Paulauskas, who

was backed by the neo-Communists, won 49.29 per cent.

Fewer than 11,000 votes separated the two candidates in this run-off election, said Jivile Verbylaite, a member of the commission.

In the first round, held on Dec. 21, Paulauskas finished first with 44.73 per cent, ahead of Mr. Adamkus with 27.89 per cent. But for the run-off, the five candidates who were eliminated in the first round switched their sup-

port to Mr. Adamkus, whose most powerful backer was current parliament speaker Vytautas Landsbergis, 65, a driving force behind Lithuania's independence from the Soviet Union.

Mr. Adamkus, 71, emigrated to the United States in 1949 to escape the Soviet occupation of his homeland. He came back only last year after working for 27 years with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the Chicago area.

## As Fossett's hopes dim, attention turns to U.S. balloonist Rutan

**WASHINGTON (AFP)** — As doubts grew over whether U.S. adventurer Steve Fossett would complete his most recent bid to become the first balloonist to circle the globe, attention turned to the next challenger, Dick Rutan and Richard Branson.

"Everything's on track. We're all settled and heading for the launch site," Mr. Rutan told CNN late Sunday.

Mr. Rutan and Mr. Branson have planned a launch Tuesday from Albuquerque, New Mexico even as Mr. Fossett and his team of experts attempt to salvage their flight, waylaid by technical problems and adverse wind currents.

A subdued official with Mr. Fossett's mission told reporters that technical problems aboard "Solo Spirit" and Mr. Fossett's failure to get far enough south to exploit favourable winds could force an end to the quest.

"He got himself into a trough" where light winds prevented Fossett from reaching the sub-tropical jet stream needed to proceed quickly in an easterly direction, said mission Director Alan Blount at a press conference.

Mr. Blount said it was "relatively unlikely" that Mr. Fossett would complete his round-the-world bid and "it is not clear to us whether he will land in Russia or continue on, possibly making an attempt at another duration record."

Mr. Fossett's team charted a risky course that they hoped

would dodge depressions and anticyclones. The millionaire investor rode the edge of a polar jet stream to attain a top speed of about 220 kilometres an hour as he crossed the Atlantic in what was probably record time.

"I hope I can keep my path to the south so I can get in the jet stream," Mr. Fossett had said during radio communication with the control tower in Bucharest.

"If I'm not successful, then I will be swept back up in the winds into Russia and that will not be a good course for me."

Flight officials feared that adverse winds would force Mr. Fossett to loop north and backwards towards Moscow. At the time of Sunday's press conference he had already flown some 5,000 miles.

At last report the "Solo Spirit" was flying eastwards at some 42 kilometres per hour at an altitude of 6,970 metres some 360 kilometres northeast of Istanbul, over the Black Sea.

Mr. Rutan and Mr. Branson, as well as most of the other ballooning challengers attempting to circumnavigate the globe, are expected to stick to calmer heights above 12,000 metres to complete the voyage, which the National Geographic Society called "aviation's last great challenge of the century."

As he made final preparations for Tuesday's launch, Mr. Rutan told CNN that "everything checked out flaw-

lessly" on his hot air, helium balloon, the "Global Hilton". With Mr. Fossett at the mercy of the winds and his heater and other equipment failing, "I'm really feeling for him now," Mr. Rutan said.

Last autumn, Mr. Rutan said he and Mr. Branson hoped to finish their westward journey in nine to fourteen days.

The 53-year-old Mr. Fossett set the world duration record last year during his second effort to fly around the world, staying aloft for six days, two hours and 44 minutes after takeoff from St. Louis, Missouri.

His team of meteorologists and advisers in St. Louis, Missouri, was working on ways to resolve the mechanical problems and steer him into better winds.

Mr. Fossett's most recent failed attempt was to circle the planet was back in January 1997.

Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Rutan, 59, completed in 1986 the first and only trip around the world in an experimental "Voyager" aeroplane — without stopping or refuelling — in just nine days.



Balloonist Steve Fossett waves to well wishers at Busch Stadium before launching his 'Solo Spirit' Dec. 31 in his third attempt to travel non-stop around the globe in a balloon (Reuters photo)

## Blair says EU presidency a 'chance' for Britain

**LONDON (AFP)** — British Prime Minister Tony Blair believes the six-month British presidency of the European Union is "a chance" for Britain and for Europe, he said in an interview published Monday in the Financial Times.

"The presidency is a chance both for Britain to show Europe how we can play a constructive role in Europe and... for Europe to show Britain that the economic reform agenda — which in my view is essential to the success of monetary union — has been taken on board and taken seriously," Mr. Blair said.

Although Mr. Blair's government has postponed a decision on joining monetary union, until the next legislature in 2002, he said he wanted to "facilitate" the efforts of those countries seeking to join EMU but without weakening the euro in the process.

"We understand there are a large number of countries which want to participate in EMU. We very much hope we can facilitate that successfully... but it must be a

robust strong single currency... so obviously we will abide by the established procedure," Mr. Blair told the FT.

"We must make sure that

we have a successful launch of monetary union because it is in Britain's interest for it to be successful," Mr. Blair added, though he said it would be

"unwise to go firm on a date" for Britain to join in.

"A single market with a single currency can bring enormous benefits, provided economic circumstances are right," he said.

On EU enlargement, Mr. Blair said "it is very important that Turkey understands there are no different criteria being applied to Turkey than would be applied to any other country."

Turkey was angry at being left out of EU enlargement plans at the last EU summit in Luxembourg and announced that it was breaking off political dialogue with Brussels.

Britain will formally open negotiations in March with six countries selected for membership in Luxembourg, namely: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia and also Cyprus provided a settlement can be found to the problem of the island's partition.

Mr. Blair also said Britain was a "bridge" between continental Europe and the United States.

## Pro-Europe Tories back Blair on EU

**LONDON (AFP)** — A group of pro-European Conservative politicians expressed support for Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair's policy on Europe in an open letter published Monday in The Independent newspaper, and called for Britain to join in monetary union.

The letter is a new blow to Tory leader William Hague, a dedicated Euro-sceptic, who has forced the Conservative Party to officially come out against joining monetary union in the near future and to undertake to campaign against it in the 2002 general elections.

The letter was signed by such prominent Tories as former Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, former Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten and former Prime Minister Edward Heath.

They said: "Conservatives committed to Britain at the heart of Europe will support Tony Blair and his colleagues in making the right decisions on the difficult challenges which lie ahead — during the next six months and beyond."

On Jan. 1, Britain took over the revolving presidency of the European Union for six months.

"Too often, Europe has been seen not as an opportunity but as a threat," the letter said, adding: "A positive European vision is critical to the nation's future success."

## No need for Asian countries to screen for bird flu

— H. Kong

**HONG KONG (AFP)** — The government Monday said the screening of travellers from Hong Kong by some Asian countries amid a scare over a deadly chicken flu was "not necessary."

A government spokesman reiterated World Health Organisation (WHO) statements that no travel restrictions or quarantine should be imposed on Hong Kong as the present cluster of cases was "not at the scale of an epidemic."

The health authority would be providing information to counterparts in the Philippines and Thailand on the latest situation of influenza A H5N1 in Hong Kong explaining that the screening of travellers was not necessary, he said.

Four people have now died from the virus and three others are in a critical condition, from a total of 16 confirmed cases and five suspected sufferers.

The statement was made after Thai authorities warned their citizens not to travel to Hong Kong, and international airports in the Philippines were placed on alert for any goods smuggled from Hong Kong while officials screened all arrivals from the territory.

Indonesia has also banned imports of chickens from China and Hong Kong.

"We appreciate other countries' concern over the issue. However, the main mode of transmission of this virus is considered at this stage to be from bird-to-man," he said.

"The transmission from man-to-man, if occurring, is considered inefficient at this stage," the spokesman said in a statement.

"Screening of travellers coming in or going out of Hong Kong is therefore not necessary and not practical," he said.

The spokesman pointed out that the slaughter of some 1.5 million chickens last week was "a precautionary move" to minimise the risk of avian flu passing to people in direct contact with live chickens.

Thorough cleansing of poultry market stalls in Hong Kong was being conducted, and with precautionary measures, such as good personal hygiene, being taken, the chance of tourists getting the avian flu was extremely small.

## Moi's KANU party wins absolute majority, reports say

**NAIROBI (AFP)** — The Kenya African National Union party of President Daniel Arap Moi, who was reelected to a five-year term, has won an absolute majority in parliament, newspapers said Monday.

The National daily said KANU had won 106 seats of 206 seats for which results were known out of the 210 which were up for grabs in general elections last Monday and Tuesday.

The Standard said KANU had 109 seats out of 205 constituencies where counting was completed.

The Democratic Party of former Vice-President Mwai Kibaki becomes the main opposition party with 39 seats according to The

Nation and 37 according to the Standard.

Mr. Kibaki came second in the presidential election in which Mr. Moi was reelected.

The opposition has won 100 seats overall, according to The Nation and 97 according to the Standard.

The chairman of the electoral commission, Samuel Kivuiti, said Sunday that official results of the legislative elections would not be released until he had the tallies from all constituencies.

Mr. Kivuiti declared Mr. Moi the winner of the presidential election, saying that with all but nine districts reporting, he had more than half a million votes more than his closest rival, Mr.

Kibaki, who was his vice president from 1978 to 1988.

The results in the remaining nine constituencies will not affect the final result, the chairman said.

Mr. Moi, at 73 one of the last of the old-guard African presidents, ran on a platform of stability and continuity in a region wracked by civil wars and genocide.

His opponents hammered on the themes of rampant corruption, brutal urban crime, a decaying infrastructure and deficient health and education services.

Mr. Moi was to be inaugurated at 11:00 a.m. (0800 GMT) Monday at Nairobi's Uhuru (freedom) Park, state radio announced.

## N. Zealand researchers synthesise mussel glue, hope it will help human wounds

**WELLINGTON (AFP)** — A protein produced by mussels is being synthesised in the hope it will help close up human wounds without the need for stitches. The Dominion newspaper reported Monday.

The protein forms the strong natural glue that sticks mussels to rocks, which researchers hope could be used to stick together human cells and tissue.

A chemistry team from Auckland University is investigating the protein, secreted by a gland in the mussel's foot.

Carol Taylor, a lecturer in organic chemistry, said if the

body did not reject the protein, stitches might become obsolete.

"Unlike stitches, the adhesive would not need to be removed. The protein would break down and disappear."

The adhesive also has potential in dentistry for repairing teeth.

Mr. Taylor and a doctorate student, Claudine Weir, have spent the year unravelling the long chain of 10 amino acids, or building blocks, that make up the protein first identified by chemistry experts at the University of Connecticut in the United States in 1985.

Mr. Taylor said one of the

greatest challenges would be to produce the rarest of the amino acids, dihydroxyproline, which is not commercially available in any form.

The scientists have a 155,000 NZ dollar (\$90,000 U.S.) government grant over three years to work on the project.

Once the substance has been successfully manufactured, it will be tested for its suitability for use in the human body.

Already there has been international interest from scientists. Mr. Taylor spoke at the American Chemical Society's National Organic Symposium in Texas in July.

## Cubans say they are the most passionate people in the world

**HAVANA (AFP)** — Cubans are the most passionate and gifted lovers in the world, if they do say so themselves.

Several studies released Sunday in the official weekly Juventud Rebelde highlighted Cubans' stratospheric sense of sexual self-worth. But others showed that only half of non-Cubans share this view.

"We're the best," a 44-year-old taxi driver told the weekly. "Not for nothing are we known as 'superlovers'."

Who knows if it's due to the tropical heat or the beautiful women.

In a poll of 300 people by the psychology department of the University of Havana, most said Cubans were more passionate than inhabitants of other countries. Only 37.8 per cent said the

island nation's population was average and just a few said Cubans lacked the passion of non-Cubans, according to Juventud Rebelde.

In another study of 1,146 Cubans of both genders, Cuban women were said to be "loving, romantic, tender, creative, free of prejudices, well developed, attractive, delicate, intelligent, passionate, fantastic, excellent, and complete."

But they also were labelled "prejudiced, selfish and promiscuous."

Cuban men were viewed by Cuban women as "good, excellent, intelligent, active, passionate, hot, sensual, insatiable, tender and loving" as well as "unstable, promiscuous, sexist, show-offs, vulgar, prejudiced and womanisers."

Not everyone on the planet shares Cubans' view of themselves: a study of 300 non-Cubans showed that most think people here are "nice, but let's not exaggerate."

Among the myths surrounding sexuality here is that the average Cuban man and woman are "filled with virtues; a typical superman and superwoman," psychologist Mabel Garcia Lobo said.

A study of 200 by Garcia Lobo revealed that Cuban women dream of an ideal man who would be about 28 years old, tall, thin, sexy, attractive and passionate.

Cuban men are on the lookout for a 24-year-old university student with nice legs, wide hips and attractive bust.



## Jordan Times

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## Playing dangerous game

THE RESIGNATION on Sunday of Foreign Minister David Levy from the Israeli government brings to a head the internal crisis within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing cabinet. Minister Levy had made repeated threats in the past to withdraw from the Likud-led coalition only to back down at the last moment. This time, however, his exasperation obviously reached its limit, and it seems that he will quit Netanyahu's team even though his resignation will not be effective until today.

By this time, the prime minister will have done everything in his power to persuade the foreign minister to stay on. But his chances of succeeding appear slim. The resigning Levy appears to be bent on leaving the pack after declaring that "the partnership (with Netanyahu) has failed."

This latest crisis in Israel may in the short run deal another blow to the already faltering peace process especially on the Palestinian front. Levy is one of the few Israeli ministers who have been pushing for the implementation of the Oslo accords. His departure at this critical juncture, when Washington is pressing Israel to spell out its position on the issue of the redeployment in the Palestinian territories, could be a temporary setback. The problem could be compounded if the government stays in power without Levy, since Netanyahu will more heavily depend on the hard-liners to keep him afloat. With such an arrangement there is no way that the peace process can advance for another year or so. In fact the whole peace effort would stagnate and collapse.

For that we will have to wait and see. Meanwhile, the game that the Israeli prime minister is playing simply cannot get any more dangerous — anyway.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's editorial on Monday urged the government to withdraw its representatives to the Turkish-Israeli-U.S. military exercises saying not a single Jordanian citizen believes that these games would benefit the Kingdom or the Arab Nation. According to the daily, it is not too late to withdraw and show the world that Jordan is dissatisfied with Israel's practices in the occupied Arab lands and does not want to cooperate with the Jewish state in any way until the Likud-led government responds to reason and implements the peace accords. When the government decided to take part in the Doha economic conference, we said the meeting would not do any good to any Arab country including Jordan, and it is now clear that all the government's promises of benefits flooding to Jordan from that summit have been a mirage, the paper said. Not a single investor came to Jordan, no solution has been found for unemployment and poverty, and the Jordanian people feel they were let down by the government, said the daily. The paper said, this time we call on the government to pull out from the military exercises, which are opposed by all Arab states and the Jordanian people, because Jordan will not benefit from them in any way.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi addressed the stalled Middle East peace process saying the time has come for Washington to step in and force the Israeli prime minister to comply with the rules of peace and respect the peace accords. It is illogical to see a single person at the head of the Israeli government behaving irresponsibly and acting in defiance of members of his own government and his political party as well as the whole Israeli society and ruining the chances for peace, said the writer. The present differences within the ruling Likud Party, Rimawi said, represent signs of discord and weakness that could lead to the downfall of the government. In light of these developments and the Israeli government's persistence on disregarding the Oslo accords, the U.S., which sponsors the peace process, has a responsibility and a duty to force the Israelis to comply with the requirements of peace, he said. Referring to Dennis Ross' fresh tour of the region, the writer said it is a clear sign from Washington that the U.S. is determined to force the Israelis to carry out the agreement on the redeployment of Israeli forces in the occupied Palestinian lands. We are cautiously optimistic, said the writer, that Ross' visit and the Netanyahu-Clinton, and Arafat-Clinton meetings in Washington will finally make things move again towards ending the present stalemate.

## The View from the Fourth Circle

# Getting excited about sports, in Iran and other fascinating places...

LAST MONTH, when the Iranian national football (soccer) team won a spot in this summer's World Cup championships, Tehran and other cities exploded in a spontaneous and intense public jubilee of joy. Many otherwise astute observers in the West were fascinated by this phenomenon of religious identity and sports zealotry, and analysed it in different ways. I, in turn, was fascinated by the Western fascination with this incident.

For nearly two decades now, since the Iranian revolution that overthrew the Shah and the rise of contemporary Islamist movements, many in the West have tended to see most Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East as hopelessly fired by religious and historical sentimentality — driven by deep religious identity and values, clinging to the 14th Century, comfortable with violence and extremism, yearning for a golden age from the Arab/Islamic past, and temperamentally, even biologically, unable to embrace the challenges of modernity and secularism.

Something bothered me about the contrast between the common Western view of Middle Easterners as religious and social dinosaurs, and the Western fascination with the Iranian expression of joy at winning a place in the World Cup tournament. So, I did what any reasonably honest researcher would do — I went off and watched television. More specifically, I watched American television — given America's status as the undisputed leader of Western civilisation — and I concluded the following: the West's fascination with the behaviour of Iranian sports fans merely reflects the latest phase of that deadly combination of ignorance and hypocrisy that have defined American and other Western attitudes to the Middle East in recent decades.

The prevalent tendency in the American and Western press and parts of academia and officialdom — to portray

Middle Easterners as very different from the West, overly religious, prone to violence, submissively accepting of power hierarchies and patriarchies, and peculiar for their penchant to wallow in a yearning for the past — seems to be contradicted by the facts. The facts suggest that Americans and Iranians — and Westerners and Middle Easterners generally — are very close to one another in their values, behaviour and aspirations.

Television and life both reveal that the two largest, regular, heartfelt, and boisterous weekly gatherings of Americans are the weekend congregations at churches and sports arenas, where tens of millions gather on a weekly basis (and fully half the country watches the Super Bowl football championship game on television in late January). For no other purpose do so many Americans get together so consistently, raise their voices so loudly, and behave with such emotion, as they do at their churches and sports stadia.

I also suspect, but cannot prove empirically, that no other dimension of life in the United States lends itself to public displays of well-meaning exhibitionism as do sports and religion; in fact, the two are now routinely combined in the behaviour of many athletes, i.e., football players who point to heaven or kneel and say a quick prayer of thanks after scoring a touchdown, or baseball players who pray together in the locker room before a game, make the sign of the cross before having to handle Roger Clemens' fastball, or, like the superstar Barry Bonds, wear the cross as earrings. Roughly half of all American television sports interviews with star athletes now include expressions of thanks to God for using them as instruments of His will on earth, or some other such explanation for their superior performance.

What I find particularly fascinating about the American

mass synthesis between sports and religion is how it combines attributes that are routinely criticised in other, especially Middle Eastern, cultures. For example, I don't know of any other sectors in the United States, other than perhaps the armed forces, that have the same level of violence, rigid hierarchy, authoritarianism/patriarchy, and nostalgia that define the Americans' wide world of religion-sports. (The violence is very old, especially the Old Testament's repeated stories of Edomites, Midianites and others being killed in the tens of thousands at a time.)

A yearning for the past is also deeply defining of the American mass weekly pilgrimage to the cathedrals of religion and sports. In an American culture whose primary values include, among others, entertainment, consumerism, capitalism, and the pervasive reach of the electronic media, the single most telling phenomenon of modern America is the television advertisement. And the single most powerful and common theme on American television advertising during sports and religious events is — holy smokes! — nostalgia for the recent, the pioneering, and the revolutionary past.

I offer this analysis in a descriptive manner, not a judgmental one, because sports and religion are important elements in my own life, and in the lives of (holy smokes) most Middle Easterners. For people in Tehran or Pittsburgh to express a combination of religious zeal and sports enthusiasm strikes me as rather normal, probably healthy, and perhaps universal. So why all the fuss about sports fans in Tehran running wild in the streets? Perhaps the full answer, as opposed to the half-hysterical misperception, is to be found in North America as much as in the Middle East.

(PS: Word on the street in Amman among those who know is that Denver will beat Green Bay in the Super Bowl.)

## Settling for God

By Michael Prior

OVER 30 years ago now, Israel's strike against Egypt, under the pretext of imminent Arab aggression which "threatened the very existence of the state," initiated the war of June 5-11, 1967. Israel, of course, was under no significant threat, let alone in mortal danger. Its real intent was to reap the fruits of victory which the war would bring, thereby fulfilling one of the major goals of the state since its foundation in 1948. On the eve of the war, Cabinet Minister Yigal Allon insisted Israel must set as one of its central aims "the territorial fulfilment of the Land of Israel." Israel's victory resulted in the conquest of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and Gaza and the Sinai from Egypt.

As a student of theology I rushed to the TV on each of the six evenings of the war and watched enthusiastically the comprehensive victory of tiny Israel over its rapacious Arab predators. Israeli propaganda was totally convincing. TV, newspaper and magazine pictures of the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem in particular resonated with my studies of Israelite history. Moreover, billboards in London assured readers that those who trusted in biblical prophecy would not be surprised by Israel's victory. It was exciting to be receiving biblical history.

Since 1967 the rhetoric of Zionism has been transposed from a secular aspiration to create a state for Jews to the apocalyptic one of redeeming Eretz Yisrael. However, like the first wave of Zionist conquest in 1948, the period since 1967 has been a catastrophe for the indigenous population. The establishment of a Jewish state in 1948 involved the eviction of the majority of the Palestinians, and the destruction of most of their villages. The occupation has brought more problems. The extension of the Zionist dream into the religious realm continues to involve the daily humiliation of the indigenous people. But, in the view of religious Jewish Zionists, and not a few foreign Christians, this is a small price to pay for the benefits of messianic redemption, especially when someone else is paying.

### The conquest of 'Biblical Israel'

Israel's long-term territorial intentions were signalled by making 4,000 Palestinians homeless in the ancient Maghrebi Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, to make way for the plaza in front of the Wailing Wall, and by

extending the boundaries of East Jerusalem within days of the occupation. There was virtual unanimity at the emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly that Israel should withdraw to the borders of June 4. The Security Council passed Resolution 242, emphasising "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war," and called for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict."

My first visit to the Holy Land in 1972, albeit one enquiring exclusively into the archaeological remains of ancient civilisations, offered the first challenge to my entirely favourable predispositions towards Israel. I was disturbed by the ubiquitous signs of the oppression of the Arabs, whom later I learnt to call Palestinians. My next visit was in 1981 to Beit Zeit University. Because the campus was closed by the military just before our arrival, our hosts put a bus at our disposal, and equal numbers of Bir Zeit and our students constituted a university on wheels. The experience was an eye-opener. I saw at first hand the creeping Israeli settlement of the West Bank. For the first time, I began to question the prevailing view that the Israeli occupation was for security reasons, and my year-long stay at the École Biblique in Jerusalem in 1983-84 convinced me that it was for expansion towards the achievement of Greater Israel. It took some time, further visits and intensive study to give my experience an ideological framework. In surveying the 30-year-old occupation, I am struck by the coalition between secular Zionism and the dictates of a particular form of Jewish eschatology which has sustained it.

Religious Zionists saw the war of 1967 as a turning point in the tortuous process of messianic redemption, and since then religious values have renewed the ideological drive and pioneering zeal of a Zionism that had become "routinised." Without appeal to religious values, Greater Israel would be little different from the fruits of old-fashioned colonial plunder. But clothed in the pure garment of religious rectitude, religious Zionism could appeal to its divine provenance and be fuelled by eschatological fervour. Its theological underpinning was provided by father and son Kook, and the Merkaz HaRav, the centre for the training of rabbis established by the elder Kook in 1921.

The teachings of Abraham Kook  
 When Rabbi Avraham

Yitzhak Kook (1865-1935) immigrated to Palestine in 1904. Orthodox Jewry was vehemently opposed to Zionism because of its secular inspiration and values, and regarded Zionists as heretics and sinners who presumed to usher in the messianic era without waiting for God. Kook's teachings integrated the traditional, passive religious longing for the land with the modern, secular, active Zionism, giving birth to a comprehensive religious-nationalist ideology. The rabbi saw secular Zionism as an instrument of God to further the messianic redemption and restoration not only of Jews, but of all humanity. He was convinced that God was leading Jews, whether secular or religious, to return to the Holy Land, after which the nation would return to its faith. God was bringing about redemption through the "divinely inspired" Balfour Declaration that "mirrored the Dawn for Salvation."

In Kook's view, the divine energy was at its strongest in the creative pioneers of secular Zionism who were agents of God even while professing atheism. If their utopian secularism was heretical in the minds of the Orthodox establishment, for him it represented the source of renewal. Practical activities were inseparable from spiritual aspirations, and social activity as well as mysticism had religious meaning: stirrings "down below" were a necessary preamble to evoking messianic grace "from above."

If Rabbi Kook's metamorphosis of secular Zionism into a full-blown practical and eschatological mysticism was virtually unknown during his lifetime, his writings, and especially his founding of the centre, have proved to be critical in the renaissance of religious and political Zionism. It was only after his death that he became a cult hero and an idolised spiritual guide in the 1970s after the settler movement, Gush Emunim, claimed him as its forefather, and devoted itself to carrying out his legacy, under the authoritative guidance of his only son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook produced doctored versions of his father's writings, reducing them to collections of articles that distilled Judaism into Zionism by means of messianism. One such collection, Orot ("Lights"), was the Red Book-of the Gush Emunim cadres.

The link between the two Kooks is the key to understanding Gush Emunim: the father is known mostly through the son, and the son inherited the aura of the father. While the father's view that the messianic era had begun was taken seriously

ly in his own day, his son now supported it with a programme of messianic political activism. He saw in the rebirth of the Jewish state the first step towards the coming of the Messiah. All its institutions were means to a messianic end: its government and army were kadosh (holy).

In the wake of the June war, nobody was keener to build on what they believed God had handed them than the group of rabbis who had come under the son's influence in the Centre. They included Moshe Levinger, Haim Druckman, Eliezer Waldman, Ya'akov Ariel, Shlomo Aviner, Avraham Shapira and others who were to become household names in Israel over the next 30 years. For them, the biblical texts were no mere literary heritage, but constituted a living title deed. Every advance of the army recalled the promise, "Every place on which you set foot shall be yours," anticipating some future time when "Your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the River Euphrates, to the Western Sea" (Deuteronomy 11:24).

On the final day of the war some of these rabbis carried their mentor to the Western Wall, where he declared: "We announce to all of Israel, and to all of the world, that by a divine command we have returned to our home, to our holy city. From this day forth, we shall never budge from here." Since the dimensions of Eretz Yisrael were those of Genesis 15, rather than of pre-1967 Israel, Jews were obliged to fulfill the "commandment of conquest" by settling in the whole land and defending Jewish sovereignty over it.

### Messianic salvation and the Palestinians

Since such settlement had redemptive and messianic meaning, and would mark a Jewish renaissance, the indigenous population could be pushed aside. It was a sacred activity, and those engaged in such a holy enterprise had "souls equal to the most righteous Jew." The first settlements were founded by young graduate rabbis of the centre. Under their influence, the superficial nationalism of secular Zionism was giving way to a religious Zionism, issuing in the popular slogan "There is no Zionism without Judaism, and no Judaism without Zionism." The settlements dotting the landscape of the West Bank in every direction are a testimony to the success of their enterprise. In addition to being a violation of international law and of the rights of the indigenous, they are a major obstacle to peace in the

region.

For the indigenous inhabitants of the region, participation in the universal redemption associated with "Kookist" settlement of the land is somewhat down the line towards the eschaton. The example of Joshua's divine mission is eternally true: the Palestinians are gerim (non-Jewish residents), who according to the Torah are to be treated with tolerance and respect, but not more seriously, they are perceived to be an obstacle to the redemptive process. Since the universal principle of self-determination is no match for God's mandate, it does not apply in Eretz Yisrael. Hence talk of human rights and demands for national self-determination are meaningless. Palestinians have three choices: to acknowledge the legitimacy of "Kookist" Zionism and receive full civil rights; to obey the laws of the state without formal recognition of Zionism, and be granted the rights of resident aliens; or, to accept incentives — including the inducement of force — and emigrate.

The secular movement of Zionism, whose tenets diverged fundamentally from rabbinical eschatology, has been transposed into an ideology which the majority of religious Jews regard as of divine origin. We are witnessing a process of "resacralisation," whereby

the irreligious programme of secular, nationalist salvation has been endowed with the mythology of traditional Jewish soteriology.

The major ideological support for Zionist imperialism and the principal obstacle to treating the indigenous people with respect come from religious circles for whom the biblical narratives of land, understood in a fundamentalist fashion, are normative. This was seen at its starkest in the assassination of Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Rabin by a religious zealot acting in God's name, but his action was merely the tip of the iceberg of Orthodox opposition to "territorial compromise." The cultural Zionist, Ahad Ha'am, saw dark clouds in the future: as early as 1913, the behaviour of Zionists towards the Palestinians made him fear for the future if Jews ever came to power. In a letter to a settler in Palestine, he wrote: "If this be the 'Messiah,' I do not wish to see his coming."

The writer is head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at St. Mary's University College, London, and currently visiting professor at Bethlehem University. He is the author of *The Bible and Colonialism: a moral critique*. This article is reprinted from *Middle East International*.

## LETTERS

### No 'childish prank'

To the editor:

JUST A few words about placing a pig's head near Al-Aqsa Mosque. Many Jewish and Christian Zionists in the U.S., Israel, and Europe tend to dismiss this kind of act as just a childish prank that really has no significance, and then go on to discuss the ruthless swagging of Hamas. I just want to remind folks in the Muslim World regardless of our cultural and religious differences that not all Christians in the West believe in the war-mongering racist that many in the Christian fundamentalist world confuse with the true Jesus of mercy, tolerance, and compassion. I for one do not recognise the maniacal ancient war deity that these zealots have revised in their quest to rule from the Nile to the Euphrates and sacrifice goats and sheep at the glorified Third Temple. I also understand the mayhem such a "childish" prank would cause in the Muslim World and the problems it would create in Arab-American relations. I just hope and pray that this maniacal war deity that inspires such "childish" notions can be smashed from history so that the true God of compassion and mercy can reign in our hearts and minds. Then and only then will Jews, Christians, and Muslims be able and willing to reconcile their many differences. Happy Ramadan and Happy New Year.

Chris Davis  
 Dallas, Texas  
 U.S.A.



## Meeting challenges of increased competition: The case of small international airlines

By Nader Dahabi

The following is based on a lecture which Mr. Dahabi, president and CEO of Royal Jordanian, delivered at a conference held in London recently. The conference was entitled "Future of Air Transport."

THE IMPORTANCE of meeting the challenges of increased competition for small international airlines stems from the fact that the tide of air transport policy is at present flowing strongly in the direction of a more liberal environment. The regulatory framework of the industry is characterised by an increasing tendency towards government withdrawal from all kinds of economic regulations and industry ownership, thus paving the way towards a more liberal and competitive environment.

Since the winds of deregulation started blowing from the United States in 1978, the air transport industry has been transformed from a strictly regulated industry into a competitive one, with the gradual acceptance by all airlines, big and small, of new concepts and new realities.

The concepts included privatisation, liberal attitudes towards new entry and traffic rights, acceptance of foreign ownership, formation of global alliances and a clear trend towards multinational arrangements.

Many large airlines swiftly adopted these concepts and restructured themselves in order to strengthen their competitive position and improve their economic performance by reducing unit operating cost and improving various performance indicators.

The realities which were established on the ground clearly reflected the importance of marketing power and operational efficiency, vital for gaining and sustaining a substantial competitive advantage.

While major airlines suddenly became more

aggressive on secondary routes, which serve as feeders to their hungry high density and high frequency routes, small international airlines around the world were struggling to react in the best possible way to the rapid developments that adversely affected their traditionally secure position. After operating for many years under an umbrella of government support and protection, they suddenly found themselves threatened in their own route regions. By the virtue of their improved efficiency and lower unit cost, major airlines were able to offer lower prices and spared no effort to improve their product and maximise their market share.

At the same time other modes of transport especially railway and road rapidly became cheaper, faster and more comfortable, thus posing another threat to short haul operations of small international airlines.

Airlines in the Middle East found themselves vulnerable amid escalating heat of competitive challenges that exposed them financially. They came to realise that the change in the competitive circumstances in the airlines industry is becoming both pervasive and persistent. The new rules of the competitive game, including price leadership, can no longer be exercised by flag carriers, and the comfortable monopolistic and duplicitous conditions were subsiding.

Meanwhile road transport throughout the Middle East have been developing fairly rapidly. Comfortable air-conditioned buses operating at much cheaper rates are now competing with airlines especially for VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) and labour traffic where time is not of the essence.

The airlines' ability to face competitive challenges was further impeded by their inherent economic difficulties including the fact they are producing their services at considerable cost disadvantages.

The present structure of the airline industry



Nader Dahabi

in the Middle East does not help the airlines of the region to establish a favourable competitive position or achieve and sustain profitable operation.

This is due to many reasons including limited volume of output, the small fleet size per type, the diversified route network, which is often designed to serve national rather than commercial interest, in addition to escalating distribution costs. The airlines of the Middle East also operate many duplicated routes from adjacent airports which leads to low traffic density and declining yields.

The relatively high unit operating cost and the declining yield of small airlines increases their breakeven profile thus limiting their ability to compete successfully and achieve profitability in order to survive financially in

the long run.

The most important key element for any change of direction is to achieve a competitive cost structure aimed at reducing unit operating cost. This involves rethinking all work processes and procedures as well as changing the company culture. Fleets must be rationalised with the aim of increasing aircraft utilisation and to improve commonality and reduce inventory cost. Small airlines should also subcontract and out source certain activities to specialised companies and agencies.

Small international airlines belonging to the same geographical area can work together to achieve the foregoing benefits through rationalisation of their route networks to adequately meet demand and avoid duplication of services and excess capacity. Inter-airline cost saving measures such as the establishment of joint ground and maintenance services would also improve their financial performance.

Most importantly, however, small airlines must make a strategic decision concerning their national mission. They must solve the dilemma of contradictory national and profitability objectives. While the first calls for connecting the country to as many destinations as possible and to serve its national and social needs, the latter calls for operating on commercial basis and confining the operation to profitable routes.

In absence of government protection and subsidy, airlines must question the rationale behind operating loss-making routes that were opened for national economic or social reasons, and were maintained by adopting a policy of systematic route cross-subsidisation. Only profitable routes should be operated while other destinations should be served through cooperative arrangements with other airlines. This includes code-sharing, alliances and joint operation.

This will inevitably result in the down-siz-

ing of the route networks of many airlines which in turn will entail structural changes. Airlines must redefine their operating priorities and establish their route network around a nucleus of profitable routes where they can achieve sustainable competitive advantage. At the same time they can enter into various cooperative arrangements with other airlines including the formation of a strategic alliance with one or more major carriers to satisfy local market needs and to increase traffic density on their own routes.

The restructuring process of small airlines should lead to a healthier and stronger set-up. By concentrating on their niche markets and reducing the diversification of their route networks, they will be able to achieve the benefits of economies of specialisation.

A specialised and profitable route network would also have a relatively lower development cost. The cost advantages brought about by the economies of specialisation increases the competitive strength of small airlines and reduces major airlines interest in secondary markets. Cooperative arrangements with other airlines can add to the competitive advantage of small airlines. By choosing a partner or partners of complementary assets and route network, small international airlines can extend their marketing strength well beyond their route network.

The way ahead for small international airlines is not an easy one. The rising competition from large airlines as well as from other modes of transport is expected to intensify. Small airlines can face the competitive challenges through a change of direction that is compatible with the industry trend. They must restructure themselves by rethinking their mission and priorities and by implementing effective strategies to overcome their chronic economic shortcomings. In short, they should be capable of riding the wave of change instead of finding themselves beneath it.

## The external conspiracy scheme

### Experts warn of growing tendency to blame afflictions on 'the other'

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — It appears hard to convince ordinary individuals in a developing country that external forces are not eavesdropping on their telephone calls or following them wherever they go.

It even gets more complicated to persuade them that their own mistakes, rather than conspiracies, are the source of their emotional problems and professional failures.

Politicians and experts in sociology and psychology warn of a growing tendency in this part of the world to believe that most misfortunes afflicting Arabs and Muslims are linked to external conspiracy schemes.

But the most propagated and accepted one is the "Imperialist-Zionist conspiracy theory" against all Arabs and Muslims.

In reality, any event that takes place anywhere in this region is related to, analysed and discussed in that context.

If the peace process makes headway, most people would see that as a conspiracy against the Arab Nation. When it fails, the same applies; and if it maintains the same pace of progress, it becomes the "mother of all conspiracies."

Although it might appear a "purely psychological problem," the phenomenon has become engrained in our daily political and social life," says prominent writer Mu'nes Razzaz. "It is affecting our future."

"Conspiracy-related terms are often used to justify our failures, defeats and mistakes," he says.

"It is always 'the other', not us, to be blamed. Any misfortune that happens to any Arab or Muslim country or individual is judged in advance as being the outcome of an Imperialist conspiracy."

This was exactly the case when Lady Diana, the Princess of Wales, and her Egyptian boyfriend Imad "Dodi" Al-Fayed died in a car crash in a Paris suburb on Aug. 31.

Days later, conspiracy-related tales engulfed the Arab World. Some said her death was

"masterminded" by "Western forces" because she was about to get married, or had married, an Arab Muslim.

Although investigation then was still at its early stages, many Arabs refused to accept other possibilities.

**"I don't know why the U.S. will be interested in whether farmers grow cucumbers or tomatoes, whether the television corporation has 1,200 inefficient staff or whether the government runs a good administrative system."**

"They were convinced that the West was weaving conspiracies against them..." says Mr. Razzaz.

Jordanians have extensively used the "Imperialist-Zionist" conspiracy theory over the past years to analyse all socio-economic and political events affecting them.

Experts say the phenomenon expanded in scope after the 1991 Gulf War — itself seen as a series of "multi-national conspiracies against Iraq."

Everything that followed the devastating war, sparked by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, became a conspiracy, the experts say.

The Middle East peace process, launched under the Madrid Conference umbrella in November 1991, was a great American-Israeli conspiracy aimed at empowering Israel and weakening the Arabs, the theory goes.

Tough economic reform policies introduced by the International Monetary Fund launched

in 1989 were likewise perceived as a way to weaken the economy and impoverish the country's 4.2 million people.

Foreign researchers, whether individuals or institutions — especially those studying human rights and democracy — were eyed with suspicion. The same has applied to embassies and diplomats who long have been perceived as highly professional spies who come to Jordan with the sole mission of monitoring people's actions and beliefs.

Psychiatrist Walid Sarhan says there is no limit to where people in this part of the world can go in believing that the world is standing against them.

Almost anything that happens to people everyday, starting from failure to complete homeworks or to honour family obligations to job dismissals, are often linked to conspiracies.

"I don't know why the U.S. will be interested in whether farmers grow cucumbers or tomatoes, whether the television corporation has 1,200 inefficient staff or whether the government runs a good administrative system," says Dr. Sarhan.

"There are millions of things under our control, but we do nothing to rectify the situation. Instead we blame other forces, and lack of resources, for our inefficiencies."

**Experts say several factors, some of them festering for years, have combined to feed the notion of conspiracy theories among Arabs and Muslims.**

Experts say several factors, some of them festering for years, have combined to feed the notion of conspiracy theories among Arabs and Muslims.

While Dr. Sarhan believes that the phenomenon is linked to post-colonialism, other experts go well beyond that.

Sociologist Musa Shuteiwi believes that Arab regimes have played a major role in encouraging the development of this trend — especially in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s —

when Arabs were suffering from defeats in consecutive wars with Israel.

Dr. Shuteiwi also blames the growing belief in conspiracy theories on the way history is presented in school textbooks.

"Conspiracy-related terms always arise in history textbooks everytime the story of Arabs losing a war is mentioned," says Dr. Shuteiwi.

Mr. Razzaz believes that religion and tradition, on the one hand, and nationalist and Islamist movements, on the other, have contributed to the growing trend.

He says that the origin of the conspiracy theory was embedded in our heritage and culture. "If somebody makes a mistake it is not his/her responsibility," he argues. "It is the devil who lured him/her into that."

Mr. Razzaz, who writes a daily column for the mass-circulation Al Ra'i newspaper, says that Arabs and Muslims believe in conspiracies because "it makes them feel better and gives them a comfortable alibi not to do anything."

In their public statements, press releases and conferences, pan-Arab movements and Islamists have extensively used the conspiracy argument to blame the "imperialists" and the "Zionists" for any disastrous situation facing Arabs and Muslims.

The media, mostly state-owned, has also encouraged this trend. While it can easily publish news and statements of popular movements blaming any development on external forces, it has hardly run articles holding the government responsible for mishaps.

But one rare exception was the botched attempt on the life of Hamas politburo Chief Khaled Misha'al in Amman in September. Hamas, as customary, was quick to blame the attack on the Israel's intelligence service

(Mossad). Days later, the government confirmed their assessment.

"There is some truth to (the Imperialist-Zionist theory)," claims Mohammad Attiyeh, a businessman who usually expresses belief in such theories. "They (conspirators) try to do whatever possible to prevent us from achieving things."

But, according to Mr. Razzaz, "conspiracy" is the wrong term used by a party or person to explain a misfortune. The term should be replaced with "defending one's interests."

Mr. Razzaz maintains that "[i]f there really were a conspiracy against Arabs and Muslims, then why would Americans have supported Islamic (Mujahedeen) fighters in Afghanistan against the communists?"

He regrets that "many of us still believe that we are perfect and that we do nothing wrong." "Arabs always feel that the 'other' is the omnipotent party that can control our destiny, which is not true."

Former Lower House of Parliament Deputy Bassam Emoush, an Islamist, admits that Muslim and pan-Arab movements have long abused the conspiracy argument.

"But it is their right since they don't have the power to do anything else," he says.

"(The U.S.) does not respect human rights and is always looking for its own interests," Dr. Emoush maintains. "But we should be more reasonable in our analysis and thinking."

According to Mr. Razzaz, there is a growing realisation among "a new line of thinkers" that the conspiracy trend is doing more harm than good to our society and that more should be done to counter it with "realistic projects."

"But this trend is not coherent," he says. "It needs time to prosper."

Meanwhile, analysts remain pessimistic. They say that Arab and Muslim belief in conspiracy theories is not expected to wither in the near future.

In fact, some believe the "conspiracy weaving mentality" will continue to dominate the minds of the people in this part of the world "until the turn of the century" at the earliest.

## Female circumcision ban ignored by Egyptian fundamentalists

By Mamdouh Afifi  
Agence France Presse

ASYUT, Egypt. — Egypt ruled female circumcision illegal last month after a long legal battle, but in Egypt's fundamentalist strongholds, many say they will never abandon a practice which "protects" their daughters' virtue.

Many families say circumcising their young girls is so necessary to their traditional way of life that they will ignore the court decision to punish doctors or others carrying out the operation with up to three years in prison.

"Circumcision is necessary for a woman because it protects her chastity and virginity," says Khaled Al-Sharif, 45, a leading member of the

Abnab tribe in the Upper Egyptian provinces of Asyut, Sohag, and Qena.

Osman Antar, the mayor of the village of Sabee, some 400 kilometers (250 miles) south of Cairo, calls the court's ruling absurd. "How can we leave our daughters uncircumcised?" he asks. "The government can do what it wants, and we, too, will do what we want. We will all circumcise our daughters, no matter what the punishments."

According to official estimates, more than 90 per cent of Egyptian girls are circumcised, usually at the age of five or six. More than 70 per cent of the operations are carried out at home in unsanitary conditions, sometimes resulting in girls bleeding to death. But many here

dispute claims that there is any health risk associated with the age-old operation, in which all or part of the clitoris and sometimes the labia are removed, with the aim of removing a woman's sexual desire.

tem under attacks by Islamic fundamentalists who claimed the practice is dictated by the Koran. The country's highest administrative court, the State Council, finally ruled female circumcision illegal on December

"Before trying to enforce the law, it will be necessary to sensitise the population of Upper Egypt to the reasons for the ban."

"Circumcision has no negative effects as (the government) claims, and today, with the progress of medicine, the operation can be done without any danger," Sharif says. Egyptian health officials banned circumcision in July 1996 but until late last year the ban languished in the court sys-

tem under attacks by Islamic fundamentalists who claimed the practice is dictated by the Koran. The country's highest administrative court, the State Council, finally ruled female circumcision illegal on December

nothing in the Sunna," the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Mohammad. But while the court ruled that "henceforth, it is illegal for anyone to carry out circumcision operations, even if the girl or her parents agree

Christian neighbours. Nadia Ibrahim, a woman living in the city of Sohag, 500 kilometres (310 miles) south of Cairo, says she fears banning circumcision will lead to "an explosion of illegitimate relationships, particularly today, when girls marry late, at 25 years old at the earliest."

Even some intellectuals in the region oppose the government trying to root out a practice so deeply embedded in popular culture. "This is an arbitrary decision which it seems impossible to apply because it goes against all the traditions of the people," says Azza Abdel Aziz, a communications professor at the University of Sohag.

Both supporters of cir-

cumcision and its critics agree on one thing: banning the practice could just drive it underground.

Antar, the mayor of Sabee, says that by penalising female circumcision "the government will push people to have their girls circumcised in secret, to run to the village barber or midwife instead of the doctor."

For many in this region, Egypt's poorest, female circumcision is so deeply rooted in tradition that it is unimaginable to abandon it.

A female doctor in the region agrees that the practice is likely to continue thriving despite prohibition. "Circumcision is such a

deeply-rooted tradition that it is difficult to change it from one day to the other," says Omayma Omranen. A local women's organisation opposing female circumcision urges the government to proceed with caution in using legal force to root it out. "Before trying to enforce the law, it will be necessary to

**For many in this region, Egypt's poorest, female circumcision is so deeply rooted in tradition that it is unimaginable to abandon it.**

sensitise the population of Upper Egypt to the reasons for the ban," says the president of Association of Arab Women in Asyut.

## Arab Gulf gas reserves put at 24 trillion cubic metres

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Gulf Arab states sit atop nearly 24 trillion cubic metres of natural gas, accounting for 13.7 per cent of the world's total gas resources, an official report showed Monday.

Qatar controls around 40 per cent of the gas in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), possessing nearly 317 trillion cubic feet (9.3 trillion cubic metres), the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat said.

The emirate has the world's largest gas reserves, after Russia and Iran.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) came second

in the GCC, with around 205 trillion cubic feet (6.15 trillion cubic metres), said the 1997 report published in the UAE daily Al Bayan.

Gas reserves stood at 189.2 trillion cubic feet (5.67 trillion cubic metres) in Saudi Arabia, 50 trillion cubic feet (1.5 trillion cubic metres) in Kuwait and 30 trillion cubic feet (900 billion cubic metres) in Oman.

The rest are in Bahrain, the smallest GCC member with little gas and oil.

The combined gas production of the Arab Gulf monarchies is estimated at 15.4 billion cubic feet (462 million cubic metres) per year, only 5.2 per cent of

the global gas production.

But gas output is set to surge as Qatar and Oman have embarked on multi-billion-dollar projects to tap their gas wealth. Qatar is also considering supplying other members with gas through a pipeline network.

The report showed the GCC controlled around 465.8 billion barrels of crude oil, accounting for nearly 45 per cent of the global recoverable oil reserves.

Saudi Arabia, the top oil producer and exporter, has around 261 billion barrels, more than a quarter of the world's oil.

## Oman's budget deficit forecast to rise 10 % in 1998

MUSCAT (AFP) — Oman's budget deficit for this year is forecast to rise by almost 11 per cent to \$767 million because of higher public spending and lower oil receipts, according to figures published on Saturday.

Revenue is forecast at 2.01 billion riyals (\$523 billion) against spending of 2.31 billion riyals (\$598 billion), according to figures announced by Economy Minister Ahmed bin Abdul Nabi Mekki.

Mr. Mekki attributed the greater shortfall to an increase in public spending on education and health and a slide in petrol earnings, which represent 74 per cent of total revenues.

Oil revenues are forecast at \$3.892 billion compared with \$3.905 billion the year before, he said, based on an average price of \$15 a barrel.

"We hope the price of oil will improve in 1998," he said.

Oman, which is not a member of OPEC, produces around 900,000 barrels a day but is trying to reduce its dependence on oil earnings.

Spending is forecast to rise from the figure of 2.266 billion riyals (\$589 billion) in 1997, with the bulk going to public service sector.

## Falling prices can hurt economy — Greenspan

CHICAGO (AFP) — Even moderately falling prices — the trend known as deflation — can hurt an economy, Federal Reserve (Fed) Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has said.

Mr. Greenspan, a staunch anti-inflation hawk, told the American Economic Association and the American Finance Association there were "valid reasons" for wanting to avoid "declines in the general price level."

"Some observers have begun to question whether deflation is now a possibility, and to assess the potential difficulties such a development might pose for the economy," Mr. Greenspan added.

"Even if deflation is not considered a significant risk for the economy, the increasing discussion of it could be clearer in defining the circumstance," Greenspan said.

The U.S. government reported on Dec. 16 that the U.S. consumer price index — a main measure of inflation — rose just 0.1 per cent in November, below analyst forecasts, bringing the index's annualised rise to 1.8 per cent.

Bruce Steinberg, chief economist with the investment bank Merrill Lynch, said at the time that the Federal Reserve would lower its interest rates this year in the face of deflationary pressures.

"The risks of deflation will overcome the risks of inflation in (Fed chairman) Alan Greenspan's mind,"

said Mr. Steinberg. In his speech, Mr. Greenspan did not predict outright whether U.S. prices would fall. "Even a moderate rate of inflation can hamper economic performance (and) ... moderate rates of deflation would most probably lead to similar problems," he said.

"Deflation, like inflation, would distort resource allocation and interfere with the economy's ability to reach its full potential," he said.

A general price drop, unlike inflation, could lead to much higher real interest rates and — as employees fight nominal wage cuts — leave the economy with higher unemployment, said Mr. Greenspan.

"Historically, it has been very rapid asset price declines ... that have held the potential to be a virulently negative force in the economy," he said, citing the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s.

But "slowly deflating asset prices," Mr. Greenspan said, "probably can be absorbed without the marked economic disruptions that frequently accompany sharp corrections."

The Fed chief said an economy with rapid productivity growth could be immune from deflation. "In the high-tech sector of our economy today, we observe falling prices together with rapid investment and high profitability."

## China's growth belies inefficiency — report

BEIJING (AFP) — Although its economy is fast becoming one of the world's largest, China remains backward in many areas when compared to other countries, an analysis in the latest issue of the official weekly Outlook says.

The frankly worded article, quoted by the state Xinhua news agency, stressed "having a correct understanding of the realities and courageously facing those realities."

China's rapid growth belies poor economic efficiency, it said.

For every 100 yuan (\$12) of added industrial value in 1994, China used 32 times more energy and 15 times more electric power than Japan, it said, describing the economy as "high input and low output."

While the country's literacy rate is above the world average, the availability of higher education remains low, the article said.

According to 1993 figures, only 3.3 per cent of China's population was eligible to receive a university education, compared the world average of 15.5 per cent.

Higher education was available meanwhile to 4.9 per cent of the population in India — another populous developing country — and 48.2 per cent in South Korea, it said.

It also warned that China's deficiencies go beyond economic data.

"The figures and charts can illustrate the gap between China and the other countries in terms of material wealth, but cannot show the gap in social development, such as the legal and justice system, citizens' ethical and moral standards, and to what degree the economy is operated by market forces," it said.

China's state-controlled media typically takes an uncritical approach, hailing the country's successes wherever possible.

Meanwhile, China took another step towards an unfettered economy this week with the passing of a new law allowing market forces to set prices, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The country's first-ever price law, passed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's parliament, will largely dispense with the authorities' power to set prices, the agency said.

Price controls will remain only in areas critical to industrial

development, for scarce commodities and important public utilities and public welfare services.

"The law also is meant to promote the healthy development of a socialist market economy," the report said.

The law, which comes into effect on May 1, covers prices for commodities and services but does not apply to interest rates, exchange rates, premium rates, stocks and futures.

Legislators and legal experts who drafted the law believed the dismantling of price controls was vital for economic development, the standard of living and social stability, the report said.

## Asian crisis uncertainty casts shadow on Australian economy — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — The Australian economy could be hit hard by the Asian crisis if things worsen in Japan and South Korea, as 60 per cent of its exports go to Asia, the OECD said.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, finalised before the latest turbulence in the Japanese and South Korean financial sectors, forecasts gross domestic product growth of 2.9 per cent in 1997, rising to 3.6 per cent in 1998 and 3.7 per cent in 1999.

But "the major risks surrounding these central projections concern the effects of recent financial market turbulence in Asian countries, which account altogether for

almost 60 per cent of Australia's exports," the annual survey of the Australian economy said.

"While the projections already embody a more subdued outlook for growth in these countries, there is a significant risk of this outlook deteriorating further, especially in Japan and (South) Korea."

The report also cited the possibility of another drought in eastern Australia, but said this would have only a "modest" effect on overall economic growth as agriculture accounts for less than 5 per cent of GDP.

Australia's economic growth record in the 1990s "is among the strongest in the OECD area" and looks set to

remain robust, despite some problems in reducing unemployment and in dealing with the fallout from a number of business collapses in the late 1980s, the OECD said.

"Strong economic growth alone will prove insufficient to bring unemployment down to socially acceptable levels," and while a 1996 labour law addresses major shortcomings of previous legislation, "a consequence of the gradual approach to reform is that it may take time for the positive effects" of the new law to show.

The unemployment rate is forecast to fall to 8.2 per cent in 1998 and 7.5 per cent in 1999, from 8.7 per cent this year.

The OECD also expressed

concern that tightening of rules governing business to prevent a repeat of the speculative collapses of the late 1980s may have gone too far. "While there is little doubt that some tightening in regulation was required, there is now a concern that this may have gone too far," the report said.

"It would now be appropriate to conduct a review" of rules governing takeovers, for example, "to ensure that they best serve the wider economic interests of Australia in having an efficient market for corporate control."

Important progress has been made in improving competition policy, but "major reforms are still needed" in shipping, postal and

railway services "all of which suffer from inefficiencies due to restrictive practices and lack of competition."

The report also expressed concern over a slowdown in tariff reductions for textiles, clothing and footwear industries, saying "risks encouraging other industries to call for a slowdown of the pace of trade liberalisation even for increased industry assistance."

"Such demands must be resisted in the interests of improving Australia's long-term economic performance."

The report is based on the premise that short-term official interest rates will rise by 0.5 percentage points to 5.5 per cent in late 1999.

### THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

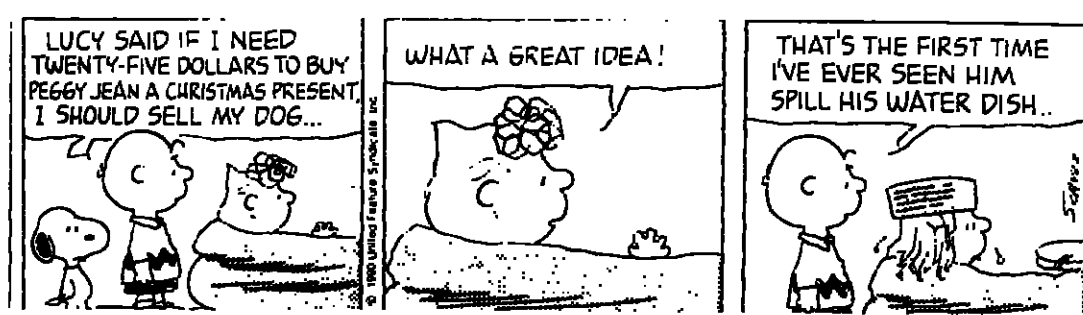
ACROSS

- 1 Vitality
- 6 Bedouin
- 10 Top point
- 14 Actress Kate
- 15 Tibetan monk
- 16 Greek letters
- 17 Tim Allen's series
- 20 Cleansing agent
- 21 Motorists' org.
- 22 Take to the air
- 23 Broadcast watchdog agcy.
- 24 Manual of tennis
- 25 Daylong building project
- 30 Wholly
- 31 Spanish exclamation
- 32 Flit about aimlessly
- 35 Comic Allen
- 36 6 on the phone
- 37 Nary a soul
- 39 Distress signal
- 40 Sundial three
- 41 Largest part of the former Yugoslavia
- 42 Character in a Beatles song
- 45 Oral ...
- 48 Inning under
- 49 Ultimatum words
- 50 Moving vehicle
- 51 Book #: abbr.
- 55 Mom-&-pop business
- 58 Leg punch
- 59 Model
- 60 MacPherson
- 61 Tomlin and
- 62 Thoroughfare
- 63 In union

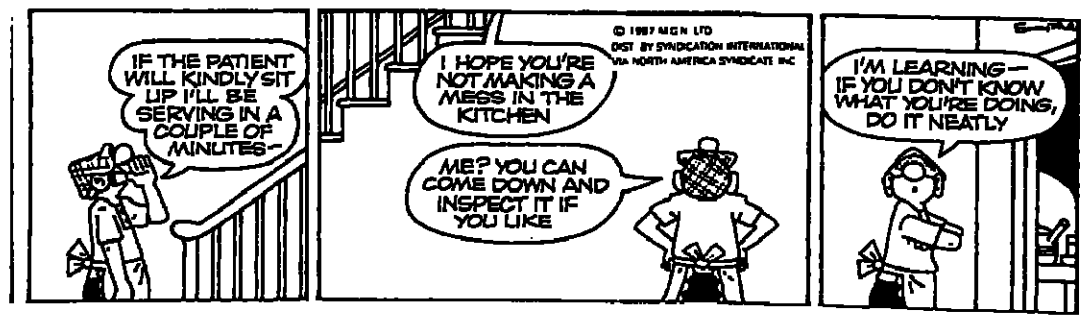
DOWN

- 1 Wonderstruck exclamations
- 2 Melville novel
- 3 Baby's word, often
- 4 Private sch.
- 5 Osaka OK
- 7 Silly wool
- 8 I love, Latin
- 9 Munich's state
- 10 Supplying with weapons
- 11 Preview the answers
- 12 El ... CA
- 13 Colorado park
- 18 Larger: pref.
- 19 Writer Hunter
- 23 Outdoor gala
- 24 Norway capital
- 25 Silbiant sound
- 26 Suspicious
- 27 Shashones
- 28 Part of USSR
- 29 Ancient region in Asia Minor
- 32 Indigo dye
- 34 Distribute cards
- 36 Russian jets
- 37 Rep. Gingrich
- 38 Spherical object
- 40 Whole number
- 41 Noise
- 42 Sockad
- 43 Bear of stars
- 44 Cave
- 45 temporarily
- 46 Boulder
- 46 Maine college
- 47 Nanticoke river
- 50 Bob the TV handyman
- 51 Egyptian fertility goddess
- 52 Town near Caen, France
- 53 Mawr, PA
- 54 Wall St. abbr.
- 56 "Do Ya" rock grp.
- 57 End of a spar?

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n'Jeff



## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Something over which you have little control is impeding your progress this morning. The frustrations of the day tempt you to get as far from your old routine as possible. The good news is that your friends would love to join you. Go do something wildly outrageous for a Monday night.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Finish up work you've put off. An older person is getting irritated. Provide what's needed before it's asked for. A friend has something you need and might be willing to part with it at a reasonable price. Before you go out and buy it new, check out the neighbourhood flea markets.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) There are chores that have to be done today. Ignore them at your peril. Your job could be hanging in the balance, whether you know it or not. If you get the work done early, you'll have time to go shopping later. And you'll be able to afford it. You'll be in line for a promotion instead of being fired.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) You feel like people are attacking you. That might be true, but it's probably not. You're just in an edgy mood. Circumstances or an individual are pushing you and you don't like it one bit. Well, it looks like you're going to learn a lot and you might even end up with money in the bank. So relax and enjoy it.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) It looks like someone from far away could help you manifest one of your talents. This is something you've been meaning to try but just never fully developed. This could generate quite a bit more income. A partner's technological expertise may be required.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You're in the spotlight whether you like it or not. There's a problem at work, and they need your expertise. On the one hand, they're putting pressure on you. On the other hand, they need what you know. You can get them to back off by pointing that out, in a nice way, of course.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You're in a scattered mood. It's hard to concentrate, but that's the very thing you need to do. There's so much going on, and so little time. You've got the help of a good partner, but he or she is pushing you harder than anybody else. Not to worry. This is good for you.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) When the action gets heavy, you calm down. You actually work well under pressure. Your friend does too, with a different approach. He or she starts barking orders, and moving quickly. That's why both of your types were put on the planet. Together, you can complete a difficult task in record time.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) You'll have to discuss a financial dilemma with someone in a position of authority. In fact, one way you'll get more money is to push yourself to take on more responsibility. Conditions are perfect this afternoon to step into a leadership role. Don't worry about anything. You'll do fine.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) You want to do one thing, and your roommate wants to do something else this morning. Don't let this make you late for work. The controversy can wait. If you put off making the decision until tomorrow, you're more apt to get your own way. Actually, tonight after dinner is a pretty good time to reach a compromise, too.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) It's possible you're doing a lot of things that don't really need to be done. Get an objective third party to review the situation with you, someone who's good at getting organized, like a Virgo. Attend an educational seminar or class tonight. You'll learn skills you can put to use immediately.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You may not have enough money to keep up with the gang this morning. That's OK. If you get used to saving money, you'll be able to do something more fun later this week. So, consider today good for practising your self-discipline. Might as well. That's what's happening.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

### THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



### JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NORST

GUBYL

LOCCIA

REBAWE

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: MERGE RAINY ADROIT LIMPID  
Answer: This will avoid alimony — MATRIMONY.



# Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

## Agreement with Palestinians cannot be implemented unless Israel 'opens' bridges

**\*\* JAWAD ANANI**, deputy prime minister for development affairs and minister of state for Prime Ministry affairs, told a group of businessmen and intellectuals recently that the policy of giving incentives and providing protection has totally changed. "The question that is more important has become: 'What would you give me back in return for granting you the incentives and in what direction we will be using these incentives,'" he said in a lecture at Al Fatha Club.

He indicated that the incentives are not given to cover management shortcomings but rather to achieve higher exports and improve the quality of production. He criticised the industrial sector for not spending enough on research and development but also stressed the government's readiness to open a dialogue with the industrial sector in order to arrive at the most suitable means of cooperation in light of the changes in the Jordanian economy.

Dr. Anani spoke about the effects of economic openness and admitted that the local industries face major challenges as a result of the partnership agreement with the European Union and the customs exemptions on imported goods. Yet, he said, despite the heavy and important challenges "a climate of optimism surrounds the future of Jordan's economy which is moving in the right direction."

However, Dr. Anani expected the development process to take some time before it bears fruit.

The deputy prime minister covered other issues such as the trade ties with the Palestinians and the economic relations with Israel. He admitted that nothing of the agreement signed last month with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) will materialise without the Israeli approval to "open" the bridges.

"The trade exchange with Israel is very limited as it amounted to not more than \$14 million in both directions whereas the trade exchange between Israel and another Arab state has reached \$2 billion a year," he pointed out.

Dr. Anani went on to say that it is Jordan's destiny to have its most important economic resources on the border with Israel. "This puts all Jordan's economic capabilities in danger," he said.

He concluded by noting that the idea to create joint industrial areas between Jordan, Israel and the PNA on the borders was to have Palestinian labourers shift their work to those areas instead of going to work at factories inside Israel (Al-Dustour).

## Arab Gulf bourses soar in 1997 thanks to oil prices

**RIYADH (AFP)** — Gulf Arab bourses performed strongly in 1997, thanks to high oil prices which boosted the region's economies, a Riyadh-based financial institute said Sunday.

The Muscat Securities Market (MSM) gained 141 per cent, closing at 480.58 points on Dec. 31, compared to 199.36 points at the end of 1996, the Bakheet Financial Advisors Institute said in a report.

The bourse of Bahrain rose 49 per cent, the Bahrain Stock Exchange index (BSE) ending the year at 2,310.09 points, from 1,547.35 at the end of 1996.

Kuwait's bourse rose 39 per cent, the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) index closing at 2,651.80 points, compared to 1,905.60 points a year earlier.

The bourse of Doha grew by 34 per cent, with the Commercial Bank of Qatar's index (CBQ) closing at 168.98 points up from 126.32 at the end of 1996.

The Saudi stock market rose by 27.8 per cent in 1997, its second best performance since it was set up in 1985.

The National Center for Financial and Economic Index (NCFEI) of the Saudi market rose to 195.89 points by year-end, from 153.10 points at the end of 1996.

The Saudi stock market, the Arab World's largest, peaked at 230 points in April 1992 as investments flooded back following the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

BFA assistant managing director, Ammar Bakheet, credited the growth to general economic improvement due to high oil prices in 1996 and 1997 that allowed governments to increase spending and boost liquidity.

The exceptional results of Muscat's stock exchange were also due to measures easing up foreign investments, he said. Oman in 1997 allowed foreigners to buy up to 49 per cent of the stocks of listed companies.

The Gulf Arab bourses were able to ride out the financial crises engulfing Asia because they are still relatively closed to foreign investors.

## European banks upped loans to Asia ahead of crisis

**BASEL, Switzerland (AFP)** — British, French and German banks made fresh loans to Asia just ahead of the financial crisis that erupted six months ago, the Bank for International Settlements said Sunday.

Overall, Japanese banks remained the largest individual group of creditors in Asia, accounting for 32 per cent of the loans to Asia's emerging economies, although the figure was lower than the 34 per cent of mid-1996.

BIS statistics through June 1997 showed that 44 per cent of the \$389 billion in international bank loans to emerging economies in Asia came from European banks, compared to 40 per cent a year earlier.

Most were short-term loans falling due by mid-1998, the BIS report on the first half of 1997 indicated.

South Korea, which recently secured a \$57 billion rescue package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), would have to pay back \$70 billion within that period, the report noted.

Thailand, also an IMF bailout recipient, had \$46 billion in maturing loans within the same period.

While German, British and French banks led European lending, British exposure was fairly broadly spread whereas that of German and French banks was more geographically concentrated, the report said.

"German banks still had, at the end of June 1997, the highest level of European exposure to South Korea and Thailand, although it was still well below that of Japanese banks," it said.

Japanese banks accounted for 23 per cent of loans to South Korea at end-June 1997, while German, French and U.S. banks each accounted for 10 per cent and British banks six per cent.

South Korea had loans totalling \$103.4 billion at mid-year, of which 68 per cent would mature within the year, the BIS said.

Japan accounted for 54 per cent of loans to Thailand, although the BIS noted that much of the money went to local affiliates of foreign banks or to Japanese enterprises, which "would significantly reduce the relative weight of Japanese exposure."

Given the scale of the South Korean crisis, major international commercial banks in G-7 countries and Switzerland said recently they would agree to a short-term rollover of loans to Seoul. Some have indicated they would offer fresh loans in support of the IMF rescue package.

U.S. banks accounted for 10.1 per cent of loans to the countries reviewed at mid-year, the BIS said.

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## BritishBank announces maturity of GCIB II bonds

**BRITISHBANK** HAS announced that shareholders in its Guaranteed Capital Investment Bond second issue (GCIB II-3 year bonds) will shortly be receiving their maturity proceeds. The returns for U.S. dollar investors will be in excess of 84 per cent.

GCIB II linked investment to the performance of the U.S. stock market via the S&P 500 Index for U.S. dollar investors and the FTSE 100 Index for sterling investors. GCIB II, like subsequent issues of these bonds, incorporated a special growth stabilisation feature which averaged the level of these indices during the final 12 months of the term to determine the final return.

After applying this feature the bank has calculated that U.S. dollar investors will receive a return of 84.06 per cent in addition to the return of their full initial investment, whilst the return for sterling investors will be 50.39 per cent in addition to the return of their full initial investment.

Commenting on the bonds' maturity, John Pascoe, chief executive officer said: "The returns show the tremendous potential that these bonds offer investors who are prepared to take a medium term view. It also demonstrates to our customers the value of our membership of one of the world's largest financial services and banking organisations. Through the HSBC Group we are able to deliver world class products, such as GCIB."

Mr. Pascoe added: "Our seventh issue of the Guaranteed Capital Investment Bond, linked to U.K./U.S. and the Hong Kong market indices, is currently running and will close on Jan. 8, 1998. The response to date has been very encouraging. The recent 'corrections' seen in world stock markets potentially offer a tremendous buying opportunity allied to all the important guarantees provided by GCIB VII."

U.S. dollar investors will receive a return of 84.06 per cent in addition to the return of their full initial investment, whilst the return for sterling investors will be 50.39 per cent in addition to the return of their full initial investment.

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## Suez Canal to maintain same rates in 1998

**ISMAILIYA, Egypt (AFP)** — The Suez Canal Authority has said it will maintain its transit dues unchanged in 1998 for the second consecutive year, and continue to offer discounts to attract shipping.

"The Suez Canal Authority announces that transit dues for 1998 shall remain unchanged," Authority president Ahmad Ali Fadel told reporters.

He also said that "further facilities and privileges are to be duly granted" for different categories of transport.

Ships transporting natural gas are to benefit from a rebate of 35 per cent, whatever their destination. Oil tankers will be entitled to discounts which increase according to the volume they carry over a year-period beginning the date they sign a contract with the authority.

Mr. Fadel also detailed other discount programmes designed to attract other categories of ships.

The Suez Canal is Egypt's third largest source of foreign currency after tourism and money sent back by Egyptians working abroad.

## REUTERS REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8167	0.6108	1.4755	133.63	1.4245	1784.20	2.0473	6.0792
DE Mark	0.5504	1.0000	0.3358	0.8125	73.49	0.7839	982.05	1.1272	3.3467
GB Sterling	1.6376	2.9753	1.0000	2.4157	218.67	2.3328	2921.81	3.3527	9.8653
CH Franc	0.6777	1.2307	0.4134	1.0000	90.45	0.9648	1208.15	138.69	4.1178
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3601	0.4569	1.1042	1.0000	1.0660	13.36	153.25	4.5811
CA Dollar	0.7020	1.2832	0.4259	1.0260	1.07	1.0000	1244.05	1.4232	4.2271
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0175	0.3418	0.0828	1337.61	0.7878	1.0000	11.46	3.4050
NL Guilder	0.4884	0.8808	0.2980	0.7206	65.19	0.6956	871.55	1.0000	2.9683
FR Franc	0.1645	0.2988	0.1004	0.2464	21.95	0.2343	33.66	33.6600	1.0000

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7085	3.7504	0.3770	3.6400	0.3057	3.6728	1622.00	3.3940
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	1.0000	5.2934	0.5321	5.1376	0.4314	5.1639	2148.20	4.7804
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0815	0.98	405.82	0.9058
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8795	8.9499	1.0000	9.85	0.8108	9.74	4037.46	9.0034
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1946	1.0303	1.0303	1.0000	0.8640	1.01	418.13	0.9324
Kuwait Dinar	3.2717	2.3180	12.2702	1.2333	11.91	1.02	10.02	4899.55	0.9324
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	1.0211	1.0208	0.9911	0.8932	1.01	414.40	0.9241
Lebanese L1000	0.68	0.4865	2.4541	0.2477	2.3916	0.2008	2.4131	11.46	2.2300
Egyptian	0.2346	0.2088	1.1050	0.1111	1.0725	0.0901	1.0821	448.44	1.0000

Energy	Oil	Gas	Coal	Electricity
Brent	15.74	15.95	15.95	15.95
WTI	17.08	17.38	17.38	17.38
Bonny	15.74	15.85	15.85	15.85
Dubai	14.52	14.95	14.95	14.95
UL Gas	168.00	170.00	170.00	170.00

Metals	Gold	Silver	Platinum	Copper	Aluminum	Zinc	Lead	Nickel
Gold (oz's)	283.1	283.6	283.6	283.6	283.6	283.6	283.6	283.6
Silver (oz's)	5.92	6.94	6.94	6.94	6.94	6.94	6.94	6.94
Platinum (oz's)	353	355	355	355	355	355	355	355
AL (3 Months)	1510	1511	1511	1511	1511	1511	1511	1511
CU (3 Months)	1894	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899
Zinc (3 Months)	1088	1088	1088	1088	1088	1088	1088	1088
Lead (3 Months)	561	562	562	562	562	562	562	562
Ni (3 Months)	6860	6860	6860	6860	6860	6860	6860	6860

Main Equity Indices	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	P/C
New York	DOW JONES	8004.8	39.88	0.5	8010.88	7951.34	7988.04
New York	S&P 500	980.2	5.16	0.53	980.49	974.65	975.04
London	FT-SE 100	5239.2	45.7	0.88	5241.7	5182.8	5193.5
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	14958.34	301.9	1.98	15007.2	14858.8	15288.7
Paris	CAC 40	3073.48	33.34	1.1	3075.3	3023.83	3040.14
Frankfurt	DAX	4384.81	69.44	1.61	4388.58	4372.72	4316.37

Commodity	Unit	Price	Chng	% Chng
Coffee (c/lb)	Spot	0.708	0.008	1.13
Cocoa (\$/ton)	Spot	1.164	0.004	0.34
Sugar (\$/ton)	Spot	0.3934	0.0004	0.10
Wheat (\$/ton)	Spot	0.4844	0.0004	0.08
Soya (c/lb)	Spot	0.1178	0.0008	0.68
Tea (c/lb)	Spot	0.5346	0.0006	0.11
Barley (\$/bsh)	Spot	0.3491	0.0001	0.03
Rice (\$/ton)	Spot	0.4016	0.0006	0.15

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET												
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN												
TELEPHONE: 507171 / 507175												
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 05/01/1998												
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH		PAST 12 MONTHS LOW		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,070	250,000	ARAB BANK	14.9	1.24	6	440	142100	324.00	323.00	1.00	-	-
N 2,340	1,640	JOP. NATIONAL BK.	10.0	0.00	9	7250	12784	1.76	1.78	0.02	-	-
2,680	1,640	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.0	0.00	11	15600	26520	1.70	1.70	-	-	-
5,100	4,610	THE HOUSING BK.	15.7	3.70	1	500	2625	5.25	5.25	-	-	-
S 4,180	1,850	JOR. RUMAIT BANK	10.0	0.00	5	4500	9055	1.99	1.99	-	-	-
980	620	JOR. DULY BANK	3.9	10.61	27	76450	49988	6.66	6.66	-	-	-
1,530	1,090	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	6.0	0.00	1	1000	1070	1.07	1.07	-	-	-
1,800	870	BEIT AL-MAL (BEITNA)	17.05	3.00	3	650	567	0.92	0.88	-	-	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS				INDEX: 231.01	CHNG: -0.20	64	106475	244785				
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.18	8	40037	77270	1.93	1.93	-	-	-
4,030	1,320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	14.9	4.80	1	250	625	2.50	2.50	-	-	-
1,550	910	NATL. PORTFOLIO	0.00	0.00	8	9200	9307	1.00	1.03	0.03	-	-
1,600	1,150	NID. EAST HOTELS	18.6	0.00	7	55850	72040	1.26	1.22	0.04	-	-
4,000	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.2	0.00	1	5000	19300	3.95	3.90	0.05	-	-
1,090	890	ZAKRA EDUCATION	9	0.00	2	650	619	0.96	0.95	0.01	-	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS				INDEX: 116.95	CHNG: -0.34	28	111006	179454				
4,450	2,750	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.3	3.65	9	5139	15386	2.99	3.01	0.02	-	-
11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.0	8.57	14	958	9918	10.35	10.37	0.02	-	-
2,890	1,310	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9	0.00	2	11200	15568	1.39	1.39	-	-	-
4,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.5	4.77	31	7300	30357	4.14	4.19	0.05	-	-
4,000	4,400	DAR ALDHA DV. INV.	13.8	4.42	6	8416	47393	5.65	5.65	-	-	-
3,650	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.7	10.33	15	6550	15998	2.53	2.42	0.11	-	-
1,150	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	4	1350	550	3.77	3.78	0.01	-	-
1,410	640	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	1	7800	4524	5.55	5.58	0.03	-	-
S 1,110	580	KANTHER INVEST.	60.1	0.00	1	250	153	0.64	0.61	0.03	-	-
1,800	820	UNIV. MODN. INDS.	9	0.00	10	5750	4868	0.82	0.85	0.03	-	-
1,620	1,350	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.4	14.25	8	3350	3349	7.71	7.70	0.01	-	-
1,110	580	NATL. CHLORINE	13.8	4.79	3	2350	3431	1.46	1.46	-	-	-
970	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	5	4250	3825	0.89	0.90	0.01	-	-
1,970	1,340	EL. TAY. READY WEAR	51.0	0.00	1	500	725	1.49	1.45	0.04	-	-
1,310	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	8	17400	20636	1.18	1.19	0.01	-	-
1,200	860	UNION CH. & VEG.	44.1	0.00	1	100	97	1.01	0.97	0.04	-	-
840	570	NID. EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	2	650	392	0.61	0.61	-	-	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS				INDEX: 115.27	CHNG: +0.09	131	83305	176120				
GRAND TOTAL				INDEX: 168.57	CHNG: -0.10	223	300790	600359				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 05/01/1998												
630	340	JOR. TRADE PAC.	9.3	0.00	5	7000	2450	0.35	0.35	-	-	-
800	660	UNION INV. 504	9	0.00	5	15300	3060	0.70	0.70	-	-	-
570	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	23600	1395	1.47	1.48	0.01	-	-
N 2,220	1,050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	8	0.00	2	6000	11800	1.95	1.97	0.02	-	-
+W 1,000	950	ARAB JOR. INVEST. CO.	8	0.00	1	200	180	0.95	0.95	-	-	-
350	140	JOR. INDS. HATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	3	592497	100724	1.17	1.17	-	-	-
4,650	3,440	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	2	1250	588	4.58	4.57	0.02	-	-
530	280	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	32.2	0.00	1	500	140	0.28	0.28	-	-	-
750	380	NATL. MULT. ENG. RANICAO	9	0.00	15	14700	7056	4.48	4.48	-	-	-
1,500	860	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	1	100	117	1.50	1.42	0.08	-	-
1,150	550	RATL. PHARM.	8	0.00	13	79250	55128	0.69	0.71	0.02	-	-
820	490	INDOS. ENG.	9	0.00	1	200	50	0.26	0.25	0.01	-	-
1,000	660	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	1	400	48	1.00	0.95	0.05	-	-
N 820	490	NATL. POLYSTY. IND.	6.8	0.00	3	1250	360	1.02	1.03	0.01	-	-
N 1,000	720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	50.2	0.00	1	200	208	1.10	1.04	0.06	-	-
N 1,200	860	NUTRIDAR 751	4.1	0.00	4	120	90	1.60	1.01	0.01	-	-
GRAND TOTAL				INDEX: 168.57	CHNG: -0.10	223	300790	600359				



## Two young swimmers to represent Jordan at World Swimming Championships

By Roufan Nahhas  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom will be represented by two aspiring swimmers in the World Swimming Championships which start in Perth, Australia Jan. 14.

Rania Ghosheh, 15 and Hana Majaj, 14, left Amman for Australia Monday to take part in the championship in what the Jordan Swimming Federation (JSF) described as a move to show "their appreciation for their efforts and achievements."

JSF vice president Tala'at Al Nasser said: "Ghosheh and Majaj have proved to be the best in Jordan especially after their achievement in the last Pan-Arab Games which were held in Lebanon last August."

"We received an invitation from the organising committee and decided to send them with the

help of their parents. Air-fare was covered by the International Swimming Federation FINA," he told the Jordan Times.

Majaj who took Jordan's only swimming bronze medal in Beirut said that she was very happy to be representing Jordan in an international event.

"I am so proud to be taking part in this event although we know that we have a slight chance to win," she told the Jordan Times.

"We hope to gain valuable experience," she added.

Majaj took third place in Beirut with a time of 2:32m in the 200m butterfly and Rania took fifth place with 1:14m in the 100 backstroke, only one second apart from the fourth and third places.

Majaj pointed out that she was getting ready for the next Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman 1999.

"We are aiming at the next Pan-Arab Games

with high hopes for the gold," she said.

National team coach Ali Nawas who did not join the swimmers because of the JSF's financial difficulties pointed out that the two swimmers' parents paid half the cost while the Jordan Olympic Committee covered the rest for their accommodation.

"We hope the girls will be able to gain enough experience and become competitive on the Arab level," he added.

Nawas noted that the national team was doing fine but said they needed more dedication.

"The problem is that the young swimmers train for some time but quit during their Tawjiji year where they have to concentrate on their studies. When they return they find out that younger swimmers have taken their places," he added.

The JSF is planning ahead for the International Swimming Championship in Casablanca in June and the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

## Germans urge FINA not to ban Hoffman at championships

PERTH (AFP) — The German team will urge world body FINA to take no action against former 1500 metre world champion Jorg Hoffman over his admission of once taking anabolic steroids, fearing he could miss next week's world championships here.

The Germans, who are also considering an appeal against the stripping of coach Winfried Leopold's world championship accreditation for involvement in doping, will defend Hoffman following press reports Monday he may be next for censure.

FINA secretary Gunnar Werner said on Sunday when asked about Hoffman's situation: "Maybe we will investigate."

German federation president Rudiger Tretow said Monday he would argue that FINA take no action against Hoffman over his admission in a television interview to taking anabolic steroids when he represented East Germany.

Hoffman is competing in the 200m and 400m events in the eighth World Swimming Championships which begin on Wednesday with the open water races.

Tretow said a meeting of FINA made the decision to withdraw Leopold's accreditation without taking into account the full circumstances of his involvement in the East German sports regime of the 1980s.

FINA took exception to Leopold's public

apology at Perth airport last week for having administered drugs to East German swimmers.

"We feel the decision was taken only by formal reasons and not discussing the background of these reasons," Tretow said.

"I think it is always bad that when someone tells the truth and has fought against drugs, that he is punished."

"Therefore we will never get other trainers to tell the truth."

If the Germans do appeal, their appeal will be heard by the same FINA bureau that withdrew Leopold's accreditation.

The bureau has also referred Leopold's case to the FINA drug panel.

Earlier, German team spokesman Gerd Heydn claimed at least one other coach, from another nation at the championships was, like Leopold, under investigation by German prosecutors for involvement in doping of athletes under the former East German regime.

"But no one's interested in him," Heydn said.

Heydn said the move was a setback for the Germans' seven-year investigation into the extent of East German drug taking in sport.

"Now no coach will ever say 'OK, I did it in the past,'" Heydn said.

## 'Borg was paid to play Davis Cup'

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A Swedish Television documentary on tennis legend Bjorn Borg to be aired on Monday reveals that the star only played in the Davis Cup in 1978 and 1979 after he was paid \$220,000.

Borg, six-time French Open champion and five-time Wimbledon winner, had initially collaborated with the producers of "The Saga of Bjorn Borg," but pulled out after he realised the programme would discuss controversial aspects of his career, including his financial woes.

The three-part documentary features more than 90 interviews, including nine with former world number ones, as well as former U.S. President George Bush, who occasionally played Borg for fun.

Sweden won the Davis Cup in 1975, but Borg refused to play for Sweden the following year. In 1977, he threatened to boycott the event, officially because of his dissatisfaction with the Swedish press.

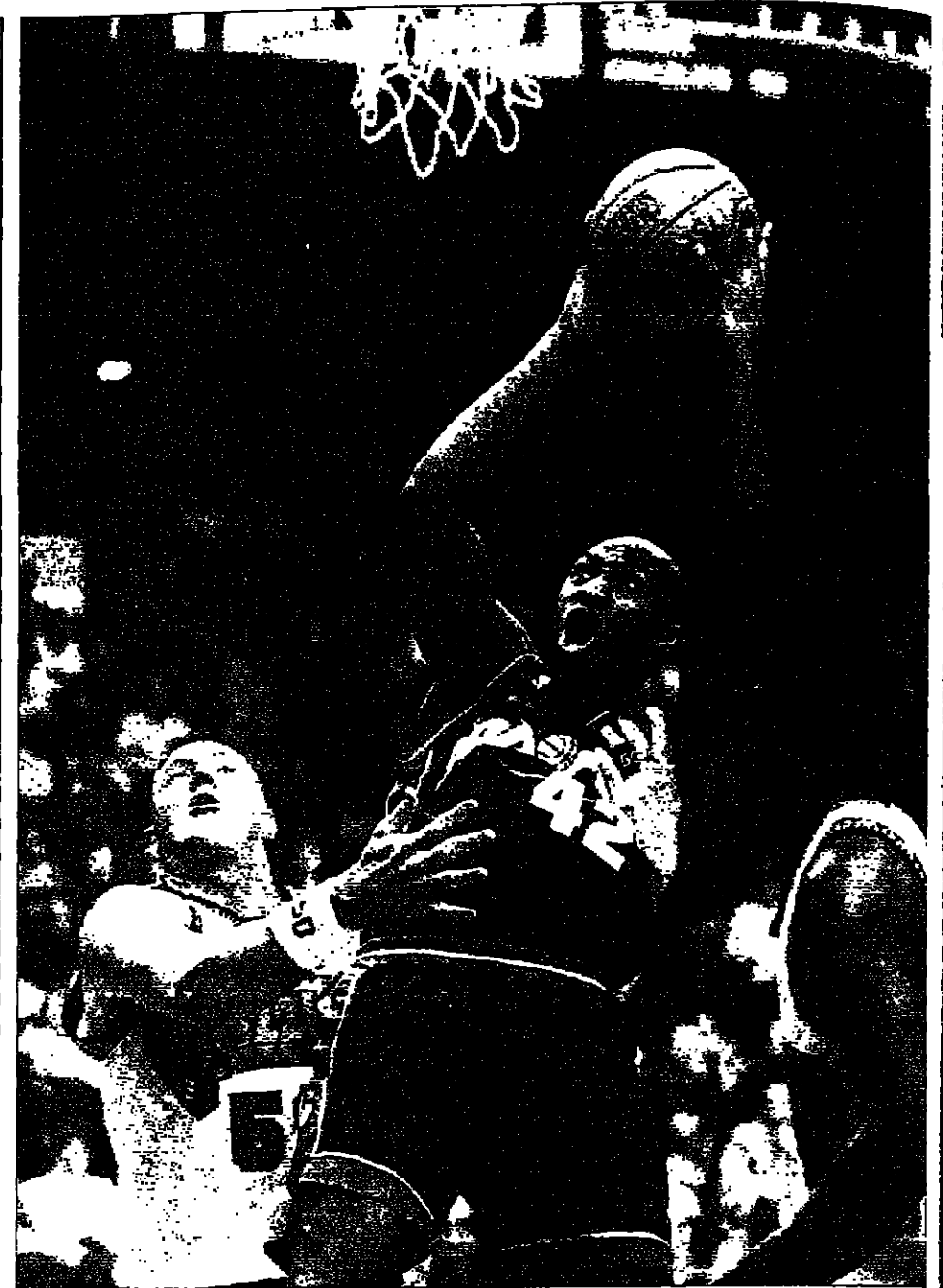
According to the documentary, Borg refused to play for nothing, like the rest of the team. The Swedish Tennis Federation was forced to give in and pay Borg \$100,000 in 1978 and \$120,000 in 1979.

"It was necessary to have Bjorn Borg in the Davis Cup matches."

Public opinion demanded it," then Swedish Tennis Federation chairman and financial tycoon Peter Wallenberg told the documentary, noting: "That was a lot of money at the time."

Borg now plays on the Veterans' Tour, but makes more headlines in Sweden for his financial problems.

Creditors claim he has owed them over a million dollars since 1989, but he has long argued that he is penniless after being tricked out of his fortune in bad business deals, and declares no official income in Sweden.



Vancouver Grizzlies' Bryant Reeves (L) grabs hold of Seattle Super Sonics' Vin Baker (42) as Baker makes goes up for a shot during first half NBA action at GM Place in Vancouver. Baker missed the shot and Reeves was given a foul on the play (Reuters photo)

## Wizards beat Suns 109-99

WASHINGTON (AP) — Juwan Howard scored 13 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter and had 10 rebounds as the Washington Wizards defeated the Phoenix Suns 109-99 Sunday.

Washington scored the first 12 points of the game and never trailed. Phoenix, behind Rex Chapman's season-high 33 points, tied the game in the fourth quarter before Washington pulled away.

The Suns, already playing without Danny Manning (abdominal strain) and Kevin Johnson (knee surgery), lost point guard Jason Kidd to a twisted right ankle with 7:17 left in the second quarter and didn't return.

Washington point guard Rod Strickland, taking advantage of Kidd's absence, just missed a triple-double - scoring 26 points with 11 assists and nine rebounds.

Seattle SuperSonics 120, Vancouver Grizzlies 108: At Vancouver, British Columbia, Vin Baker scored 30 points and Seattle made its first 12 3-point shots in a victory over Vancouver.

Hersey Hawkins was 5-for-5. Gary Payton was 3-for-4. Detlef Schrempf and Sam Perkins were each 2-for-3 and Greg Anthony was 1-for-3 from 3-point range for Seattle, which finished 13-of-16 from behind the arc.

While the National Basketball Association doesn't keep records for consecutive 3-point shots, the Indiana Pacers hold the record for most 3s without a miss in one game — 7-for-7 against Atlanta on Jan. 20, 1995.

Sam Mack, getting his first start after missing two games with a sprained right hand, and Shareef Abdur-Rahim each scored 21 points to lead the Grizzlies, who have lost six in a row and nine of their last 10.

Sacramento Kings 106, Charlotte Hornets 90: At Sacramento, California, Mitch Richmond scored 11 of his 23 points in a lopsided first quarter and Sacramento went on to lead by 30 in the second quarter.

Sacramento centres Michael Stewart and Olden Polynice dominated the middle. Stewart had 10 points, nine rebounds and three blocks and Polynice had 18 points and nine boards. Hornets centre Vlade Divac was held to 2 points on 1-for-4 shooting.

Glen Rice, coming off a season-high 42-point game against the Heat, was contained to 5-for-16 shooting and 15 points. David Wesley topped Charlotte with 17 points.

Philadelphia 76ers 113, Los Angeles Lakers 107: In the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood, Allen Iverson scored 31 points and Philadelphia handed Los Angeles its first loss of the season with Shaquille O'Neal in the lineup.

The Sixers closed the game with a 23-10 run and completed their first season sweep of the Lakers since 1982-83.

Iverson and Jim Jackson keyed the 76ers over the final 4:03, scoring 19 of the team's final 23 points. Iverson added 11 assists. O'Neal led the Lakers with 26 points and 16 rebounds in 31 minutes off the bench.

## Sanchez Vicario guides Spain home at Hopman Cup

PERTH (AFP) — The magic doubles skills of Arantxa Sanchez Vicario guided Spain to a hard-earned victory over rank outsiders Slovak Republic at the Hopman Cup tennis mixed teams tournament here Monday.

On the second day of the competition at Burswood Dome, Spain clinched the tie 2-1 when Sanchez Vicario and Carlos Moya proved too strong for Karol Kucera and Karina Habsudova in the decisive mixed doubles after the singles clashes had been shared.

With Sanchez Vicario — who has shared in no fewer than 55 doubles titles in her career — taking a starring role, the Spaniards clinched the doubles 7-6 (7-3), 6-1.

Moya, under the weather with a heavy cold, paid tribute to his partner, saying: "She was marvellous. I was surprised at how well she played."

He said it was the first mixed doubles match in which he had played and the tactical skills of his partner were critical.

Big-serving Kucera made the doubles match crucial when he conquered the highly-ranked Moya in the men's singles.

Kucera, 23, ranked 24th in the world, beat seventh-ranked Moya, 21, in straight sets, 7-5, 6-4, to level the tie at 1-1 after Sanchez Vicario had put Spain ahead by winning the women's singles.

Sanchez Vicario beat Habsudova 6-2, 6-3.

Spain were firm pre-tour-



Arantxa Sanchez Vicario

nament favourites to win the AS900,000 (\$587,880) contest, while the Slovak Republic were the least fancied.

They had to beat Romania in a qualifying clash last Saturday even to gain entry to the eight-nation, round-robin competition.

Sanchez Vicario, ranked ninth in the world, held her composure to overcome a determined Habsudova, ranked 29th, in the singles.

The Spaniard broke her opponent's service in the first, fifth and seventh games to snatch the opening set.

In the men's singles, Kucera held steadier in a see-sawing opening set with Moya, in which service was broken five times — three times by Kucera.

In the second set Kucera forced his opponent into a series of costly errors.

The flustered Spaniard

also sent down five double faults.

### South Africa fight U.S. headstart

Meanwhile, South African Wayne Ferreira overcame the United States' Jonathan Stark in three sets to revive his country's hopes against the defending champions in a thrilling Hopman Cup tennis tie here late Monday.

Ferreira, ranked 43rd in the world, beat Stark, 95th in the rankings, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in 96 minutes in the men's singles to level the tie.

Ferreira's win came after Chanda Rubin had given the unseeded United States a great start by defeating Amanda Coetzer in straight sets in the women's singles.

Rubin, ranked number 30th in the world, won 6-4, 6-3, repeating the win over the South African she achieved in the tournament final a year ago, when the United States completed a 2-1 triumph.

The result of the current tie now hinges on the mixed doubles.

South Africa are seeded third in the eight-nation competition.

"It is nice to get a win on the board," said Rubin, 21, from Lafayette, Louisiana. "It is a great start to the year and, naturally, I am very happy about it."

Rubin's said her one regret was the inconsistency of her service after sending down 10 double faults.

"My serve was not quite there," she said. "I obviously have to work on it."



Slovenian Urska Hrovat passes a gate during the first leg of her Women's World Cup Slalom race in Bormio. Hrovat clocked the fastest time of the first leg at 42.75, equal with Sweden's Ylva Nowen (Reuters photo)

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	George Clooney & Nicole Kidman ... in <b>THE PEACEMAKER</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Winona Rider & Anne Bancroft ... in <b>AMERICAN QUILT</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	<b>SCREAM</b> Shows: 12:00, 6:30 <b>AL MASEER</b> (Arabic) Nour Al Sharif Shows: 8:30, 10:45 <b>HERCULES</b> Shows: 2:00 p.m.	CONCORD "1" <b>MR. BEAN</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15 <b>MURDER 1600</b> Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" <b>MR. BEAN</b> Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN Demi Moore ... in <b>THE JUROR</b> Shows: 8:30, 10:30 <b>GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE</b> Shows: 2:00, 6:30	ABDOUN Jim Carie... in <b>THE CABLE GUY</b> Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	
	<p>badly advising him.</p>						



SPORTS  
IN BRIEFShearer begins  
comeback

LONDON (AFP) — England striker Alan Shearer moved a major step closer to a return to football when he resumed training with the rest of the Newcastle squad on Monday. The 15 million pound star has not kicked a ball in competitive football this season after injuring his right ankle and suffering a fracture to a bone in his right leg in a pre-season tournament at Goodison Park in early August. But he has made good progress and has been able to do more strenuous work in the last day or two. Although both Shearer and manager Kenny Dalglish have refused to put a date on the striker's likely return to action it now seems possible he could be back by late January or early February, at least a month ahead of schedule. The Magpies FA Cup tie against Stevenage in the fourth round is the first possible target. Dalglish said: "We will tell everyone when Alan is ready but it is still far too early to speculate. We want him to come back when he is ready and not before."

Gress to coach  
Swiss team

GENEVA (AFP) — Gilbert Gress, a 56-year-old Frenchman, is set to become the new coach for Switzerland's national soccer team, replacing Rolf Fringer, the Swiss national football spokesman said here Monday. The association's executive body is expected to ratify the decision "at the end of the week or the start of the following week." Gress, 56, who has coached the Swiss national team since 1999, was expected to meet in the next few days to approve his departure in the spring. Gress, recently granted Swiss citizenship, will double up as coach to both the club and the national team until the end of the season. Gress played with Strasbourg, Stuttgart and Marseille and achieved most success as a coach with Strasbourg.

Dundee wants to  
leave Karlsruhe

BONN (AFP) — South African-born Sean Dundee wants to leave his German first division Club Karlsruhe SC to revive his career. "It's time to leave now. It's nothing to do with Karlsruhe. I just need a change," the 25-year-old told the Monday edition of Kicker. Dundee, one of the leading scorers in the German Bundesliga last year, was selected for the national team after changing nationality. But since then his form has slumped. Dundee's contract runs until 2003 and Karlsruhe have set a transfer fee of eight million marks (\$4.4 million). "I'm scared that it's impossible to leave under these circumstances," Dundee added. Karlsruhe are already looking for a new striker and tried to exchange Dundee with Borussia Moenchengladbach's Polish forward Andrzej Juskowiak before the winter break. His Karlsruhe coach Winfried Schäfer said in the same edition of Kicker that Dundee should learn to say no to his personal managers who he felt were badly advising him.

## SCOREBOARD

## FA Cup third round

Chelsea	3	Manchester United	5
Everton	0	Newcastle	1
Wimbledon	0	Wrexham	0
Hereford v Tranmere — postponed due to waterlogged pitch			

## Greek League

AEK Athens	3	OFI	0
Panathinaikos	1	Olympiakos	2
Ethnikos	0	Kalamata	0
Ionikos	0	PAOK	1
Heraklis	1	Pirgos	0
Kavala	0	Panionios	0
Veria	2	Apollon	2
Athinaikos	4	Proodeftiki	2
		Xanthi	1

## Spanish League

D. Coruna	2	Sporting Gijon	1
Valencia	1	Tenerife	2
Real Sociedad	1	Malorca	0
Espanyol	2	Valladolid	0
Zaragoza	1	Athletic Bilbao	1
Merida	4	Celta Vigo	0
Oviedo	1	SD Compostela	1
Betis	3	Real Madrid	2

## French League

Marseille	1	Chateauroux	0
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## Portuguese League

Vitoria Setubal	4	Farense	1
Campomaiorense	2	Desportivo Chaves	1
Leca	1	Vitoria Guimaraes	0
E. Amadora	1	Boavista	2
Varzim	0	Salgueiros	2
Benelenses	0	Maritimo Funchal	2
A. Coimbra	2	Sporting Braga	2
FC Porto	2	Benfica	0

## Italian Serie A

Inter Milan	1	Juventus	0
Atalanta	2	Piacenza	2
Bologna	2	Brescia	1
Fiorentina	1	Sampdoria	1
Lecce	2	Empoli	2
Napoli	1	AC Milan	2
Parma	1	Lazio	1
AS Roma	1	Udinese	2
Vicenza	1	Bari	2

## NBA

Washington	109	Phoenix	99
Seattle	120	Vancouver	108
Sacramento	106	Charlotte	90
Philadelphia	113	LA Lakers	107

## Australian men's Hardcourt Tennis Championship

## Singles Round one:

Vincent Spadea (USA) — Nicolas Kiefer (Ger x6)	6-3, 4-6, 6-4
Jason Stoltenberg (Aus) — Juan Antonio Marin (Spa)	6-4, 6-1
Thomas Johansson (Swe x7) — Byron Black (Zim)	7-5, 6-3

Slav Dosedel (Cze) — Andrea Gaudenzi (Ita)	4-6, 6-2, 6-1
Brett Steven (Nzl) — Lionel Roux (Fra)	6-3, 6-3
Jan Siemerink (Ned) — Dominik Hrbaty (Svk x8)	6-3, 6-7 (7-5), 6-3

Doubles Round one	
Todd Woodbridge-Mark Woodforde (Aus x1)	
Davis Adams (Rsa)-Aleksandar Kitinov (Mkd) 7-6 (8-6), 6-4	

## Australian Women's Hardcourt Tennis Championship Singles round one

Sylvia Plischke (Aut) — Kristine Kunce (Aus) 6-3, 6-2	
Sarah Pitkowski (Fra) — Joannette Kruger (Rsa x6) 6-2, 3-6, 6-2	
Ai Sugiyama (Jap x4) — Magdalena Maleeva (Bul) 7-5, 6-2	

Corina Morariu (USA) — Nicole Pratt (Aus) 7-5, 6-2	
Denisa Chladkova (Cze) — Mana Endo (Japan) 7-6 (10-8), 6-2, 7-6 (9-7)	

## Hopman Cup

Spain - Slovak Republic 2-1	
Men's singles	
Karol Kucera — Carlos Moya 7-5, 6-4	

Women's singles	
Aranxa Sanchez Vicario — Karina Habsudova 6-2, 6-3	

Mixed doubles	
Moya/Sanchez Vicario — Kucera/Habsudova 7-6 (7-3), 6-1	

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF &amp; TANNAR HIRSH

## WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	2a Pass ?	What do you bid now?
AA QJ 983 7 Void 07643 AK Q8	Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	AA K 1082 07 07642 AA K J
The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST	The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST	
1a Pass 2c Pass	1a Pass 27 Pass	
2a Pass 7	2a Pass 30 Pass	
What do you bid now?	What do you bid now?	
Q. 2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:	Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	
AA K J 4 093 0A986 4943	1098 CAK Q 1087 01084 46	
The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST	Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?	
10 Pass 1a Pass	Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:	
2a Pass 7	AA K 108 07 0982 0K98 43	
What do you bid now?	Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?	
Q. 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:		
AK Q5 0A98 0K AK QJ 1076		
The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST		
10 Pass 2a Pass		
2a Pass 7		
What do you bid now?		

## Packers closer to Super Bowl repeat

GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AFP) — Super Bowl champions Green Bay continued their dominance at Lambeau Field with a 21-7 victory over Tampa Bay Sunday in the second round of the National Football League playoffs.

But the Packers, who have never lost a home playoff game, will have to win on the road to return to Super Bowl.

They will travel to San Francisco next week to battle the 49ers for the National Conference title and a Super Bowl berth.

The 49ers are gunning for their sixth Super Bowl title, but they have been eliminated from the playoffs by the Packers each of the last two years.

Dorsey Levens rushed for a club playoff record 112 yards in Sunday's win over the Buccaneers.

Brett Favre hit tight end Mark Chmura with a three-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter and Ryan Longwell kicked field goals of 21 and 32 yards in the second quarter to stake Green Bay to a 13-0 halftime lead.

A six-yard run by fullback Mike Alstott with 6:17 left in the third quarter capped an eight-play, 94-yard drive and pulled the Bucs within 13-7.

But Levens scored on a two-yard run and Favre ran for the two-point



Green Bay Packers' Dorsey Levens (25) jumps over players while rushing for 112 yards against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in NFC divisional playoff action at Lambeau Field in Green Bay January 4. The Packers defeated the Buccaneers 21-7 and will play the San Francisco Forty Niners in the NFC final (Reuters photo)

conversion with 13:37 left in the fourth quarter to increase Green Bay's lead to 21-7.

The odds were heavily stacked against the Buccaneers. Along with trying to tackle the Lambeau mystique, the Bucs had to contend with the cold weather factor.

Temperature at kickoff was 29 Fahrenheit, which spelled impending doom for Tampa Bay. The Floridians had lost all 16 of their previous games in which the temperature was below 40 F at kickoff.

Favre entered with a 22-0 record at home when the game-time temperature dips below 35 degrees.

But the Bucs managed to hang in there despite squandering three field goal opportunities and committing two turnovers in the first half. Michael Husted had a 43-yard field goal attempt blocked by Green Bay's Bob Kuberski with 9:05 left in the first quarter. The Bucs failed on a fake field goal and flubbed another field goal attempt due to a bad snap in the second quarter.

## Broncos trample Chiefs hopes with 14-0 win

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AFP) — The Denver Broncos trampled the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl hopes on Sunday, grabbing a 14-0 victory in the second round of the National Football League playoffs.

Terrell Davis rushed for 101 yards and two touchdowns, including the go-ahead score with 12:32 left, and cornerback Darrien Gordon made two clutch defensive plays in the final quarter to give the Broncos a chance at the American Conference crown and a Super Bowl berth.

The Broncos will meet the Pittsburgh Steelers next Sunday in the AFC final. It will be the third time in four years that Pittsburgh will host the AFC title game.

The defeat marked the second time in three years that the Chiefs

entered the playoffs as the AFC's top seed and lost in the second round. Two years ago, Kansas City was beaten at home by Indianapolis 10-7.

Davis scored on a pair of one-yard runs and rushed for 70 yards on 11 carries in the second half after being held to 31 yards on 14 carries in the first half.

Gordon tackled Kansas City's Louie Aguiar three yards shy of a first down on a 4th-and-6 play off a fake field goal and deflected the final pass from Kansas City's Elvis Grbac away from intended receiver Lake Dawson in the end zone with 12 seconds left.

Following a 43-yard pass from John Elway to Ed McCaffrey to the Kansas City 1, Davis was stuffed for no gain on consecutive running

plays. But facing a 3rd-and-goal, Broncos coach Mike Shanahan opted to give the ball to Davis again and he bolted up the middle for a one-yard touchdown to give Denver a 14-10 lead.

On the ensuing kickoff, the Chiefs took over at their own 28. On the first two plays, Elvis Grbac hit Andre Rison with a 23-yard pass and Marcus Allen broke off a 14-yard run to the Denver 35.

But the drive stalled when Grbac threw an incompletion on a 3rd-and-6 play at the Denver 31.

Pete Stoyanovich was sent out to attempt a 48-yard field goal, but Chiefs coach Marty Schottenheimer tried a fake. Holder Aguiar took the snap on 4th-and-6 and raced to his right. But the Broncos were not surprised by the

fake and Aguiar was tackled by Gordon, three yards shy of a first down with 9:37 left.

The Chiefs reached the Denver 20-yard line in the closing seconds. A 29-yard pass interference penalty against Broncos cornerback Ray Crockett, a 12-yard pass from Grbac to Lake Dawson on a 4th-and-9 play, and a 23-yard pass from Grbac to Andre Rison moved Kansas City to the Denver 28.

But on a 4th-and-2 play at the Denver 20 with 19 seconds left and no timeouts, the Chiefs elected to take a shot in the end zone instead of shooting for the first down. Grbac threw to his left for Dawson, who raced for the end zone, but Gordon cut in front of the receiver, and deflected the ball.

## Inter beat Juventus in clash of the titans

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan won their clash of the titans here on Sunday night, when the Italian league leaders beat reigning champions Juventus 1-0 before 80,000 people at San Siro.

France's Youri Djorkaeff scored the goal but the match-winner came gift-wrapped from Inter's Brazilian star Ronaldo.

It was Juventus' first defeat of the season and propelled Inter, who had Frenchman Benoit Caulet sent off five minutes from the whistle, a full four points clear at the top of the Serie A.

But Inter snatched victory after Juventus had shown all the initiative in the first half and only some desperate defending had kept them out.

And the worrying aspect of his side's performance had not escaped coach Gigi Simoni.

"It took real character to turn round a match which was uphill all the way, but there was a negative aspect to it all as well. We've started other matches with a lot more self belief than we did tonight."

"I'm happy to have won a great game against a great opponent."

But we've got to start believing that we too are a great team.

Juventus showed what they can do, and we've got to learn from them.

"A draw would have been a fairer result, but that's the way it goes. We didn't deserve to lose to Udinese in our last match, and tonight we won."

Juventus coach Marcello

Lippi stood by his men, and maintained the title race was still wide open.

"We've lost a battle, but on tonight's evidence, we're still very much a part of the war. I'm sorry we lost, because we didn't deserve to."

"Obviously, it would have been better if we'd won, but I don't think this changes anything. I'm sure that they're happy in the Inter dressing room, but I very much doubt that they think they're the masters of the championship."

In a tense and tightly marked start, the first real scoring chance did not come until the 16th minute.

Juventus' midfielder Moreno Torricelli swept past two Inter men and fed the ball through for Alessandro Del Piero, whose deft pass picked out an unmarked Edgar Davids — only for the Dutchman's powerful shot to find the fists of Inter keeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

Ninety seconds later, the Inter defence had to block a dangerous bicycle kick from Antonio Conte and thirty seconds after that it was defender Ciro Ferrara's turn to test Pagliuca from 15 yards.

Although Juventus had the match by the scruff of the neck, Inter very nearly took an unexpected lead in the 22nd minute.

Ferrara bungled an easy clearance, allowing Ronaldo to shoot from 10 yards, and it took a reflex save by Juventus' World Cup goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi to push the Brazilian's chip over the bar.

Inter held on until the break, and were rewarded just two minutes after the restart.

Ronaldo collected a pass on the right flank and beat two Juventus men before squirting the ball across the face of the goal — between

two defenders and Peruzzi — for the waiting Djorkaeff to knock it home at the far post.

The goal galvanised Inter, whose Argentine midfielder Javier Zanetti blasted narrowly wide soon afterwards, while Ronaldo had a snap-shot pushed away for a corner.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi soon saw the writing on the wall, and within minutes made a double substitution, swapping defender Mark Iuliano and midfielder Zinedine Zidane for another midfielder, Angelo Di Livio, and an extra striker, Uruguayan Daniel Fonseca.

But Ronaldo forced yet another fine save from

Peruzzi on the hour, running on for an angled shot after being picked out by Djorkaeff.

Juventus kept looking for an equaliser and thought they had one in the 70th minute, when Filippo Inzaghi went past Inter goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca and slammed the ball into the corner of the net.

But instead of getting a goal, Inzaghi was given a booking for having controlled the ball with his hand first.

Ronaldo was then caught out by the referee four minutes later, being ruled offside after rounding Peruzzi and preparing to tap the ball into an empty net.

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## U.S., Turkish ships arrive in Israel for controversial trilateral manoeuvres

HAIFA (AFP) — U.S. and Turkish navy ships arrived in this Mediterranean port Monday to begin joint manoeuvres with Israel which have drawn sharp protests from Arab states, officials said.

One U.S. ship and two Turkish frigates joined Israeli forces for the five-day exercise code-named Reliant Mermaid. Israeli navy spokeswoman Gilla Gerzon said.

After two days of land preparations, the seaborne portion of the manoeuvres is scheduled to take place Wednesday and involve a mock rescue of a sinking fishing ship in the eastern Mediterranean, officials said.

The operation, organised in the framework of a 1996 Israel-Turkey military cooperation agreement, will involve ships, helicopters and aircraft.

The three navies will evaluate the operation during meetings Thursday and the U.S. and Turkish ships are then due to depart Friday, Ms. Gerzon said.

Jordan was scheduled to observe the exercise, but Egypt rejected a similar invitation, preferring to join the Arab diplomatic assault on Turkey's growing military ties with Israel.

Syria led criticism of the operation's launch on Monday.

"The manoeuvres which start today are one of the consequences of the military alliance between Israel and Turkey and reflect the aggressive intentions of those two countries against Arabs," the official newspaper Tishrin said.

It called the 1996 Israel-Turkey military pact "a destabilising element which will provoke conflict and return the Middle East to the climate that reigned during the 1950s, when political alliances sparked conflict and revived hostility against the West in general and the U.S. in particular."

The manoeuvres were criticised by the Arab League on Sunday, while Iraq, Libya and Iran have also issued protests, as has Greece, Turkey's historic rival in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkish-Israeli ties however are expected to deepen further after the European Union's decision last month not to consider Turkey's candidacy to join the 15-nation body.

Ankara has already indicated it will now expand relations with partners outside Europe, notably the U.S. and Israel.

Turkish and Israeli officials have insisted that this week's manoeuvres are not designed to threaten any country but simply to improve cooperation in responding to emergencies.

"By familiarising themselves with each other's capabilities and working together, elements of three naval forces which regularly operate in the Mediterranean will be able to respond to humanitarian emergencies more effectively," an Israeli army spokesman said.

The joint exercises were originally due to have been held last summer and then in November but were postponed each time amid the criticism from Arab states.

Under their 1996 military agreement, Israel trains Turkish pilots in return for the right to conduct training exercises in Turkish air space.

Israel also signed a \$630 million contract to modernise Turkey's F-4 fighters and agreed on joint production of Israel's Popeye ground-to-air missile.

Last week Turkey announced that Israeli state defence firms had also won a \$75 million contract to upgrade F-5 fighter jets in collaboration with a firm from Singapore.



BY THE ADVICE OF THE PROPHET: Jordanians were buying dates in the public market in Amman on Monday. Dates are traditionally eaten in the Holy Month of Ramadan as Prophet Mohammad advised that fasting Muslims should break their fast by eating at least one date (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

## Baghdad accuses Ankara of working to empty Iraqi Kurdistan

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Iraqi parliamentary official accused Turkey on Monday of working to empty Iraqi Kurdistan of its inhabitants and encouraging them to seek refuge in Europe.

"Turkey's constant military operations in this region have pushed the Kurds into flight from northern Iraq, which is out of the control of Baghdad, Deputy Speaker Ajil Jalal Ismail told AFP.

"Turkey is encouraging a clandestine immigration [into Europe] because it wants to empty the region for its own interests," said Mr. Ismail, himself an Iraqi Kurd from the northern town of Erbil.

"The Kurdish exodus from northern Iraq is part of an American-Zionist plan to harm the sovereignty of Iraq," he charged, accusing Turkey of "executing this plan." European Union countries have voiced mounting concern over an influx of Kurds, mostly from Turkey but also from northern Iraq, where the Turkish army launches regular incursions in its fight against Turkish Kurd separatists.

Mr. Ismail, without giving figures, said the Iraqi parliament was also worried by the exodus from the north.

An information ministry spokesman, meanwhile, pinned the blame on the United States and its "interference" in the Kurdish-held north since the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

"The Iraqi Kurds are victims of an American-British plot in which other regional parties are taking part," the spokesman told AFP, without naming Turkey.

The U.S. and Britain set up a "safe haven" for Iraqi Kurds after the Gulf conflict to reverse a massive exodus of Kurds fleeing attack by the Iraqi army.

## Turkey says Kurd influx to Italy is 'criminal act'

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey on Monday branded the flight of mainly Kurdish refugees to Italy as a "purely criminal act" and urged European states to cooperate to stem the "smuggling."

"This is a criminal act that should be dealt with accordingly," foreign ministry spokesman Sermet Atacanli told reporters here.

"Some people, including a terrorist organisation [the separatist Kurdish Labour Party, or PKK], and organised crime groups seeking to raise money from smuggling people, exploit aspirations for a better economic life," he said.

Mr. Atacanli said European countries should refrain from making statements on possible political asylum that could encourage other Kurds.

His remarks came after more than 1,000 illegal refugees, mainly Turkish and Iraqi Kurds, arrived in Italy after fleeing Turkey on board two ships, sparking fears of a larger immigration wave into western Europe.

Italy has already said it

could accept some of the refugees, which also included Asians.

Mr. Atacanli denied reports that several thousand other Kurdish refugees could be on their way to Italy, saying "we have no such information."

He said Turkish police had intensified efforts to clamp down on would-be refugees, and asked European states to cooperate. "A joint and determined action is necessary to prevent the flow of illegal immigrants," he said.

In a related development, Istanbul police overnight detained more than 200 Asian refugees preparing to leave Turkey for western Europe through illegal means, police sources said Monday.

The refugees, mainly from Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, were detained in police operations on Istanbul's European side, they said.

Turkish police also detained 37 Kurds in other operations in Istanbul at the weekend.

Ankara also confirmed

news reports that it would send its top police officer to Rome for an international meeting Wednesday to find ways to end the exodus of Kurdish refugees from Turkey.

The head of the Turkish security department Necati Bilican will meet his counterparts from France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands in the Italian capital, a ministry official told AFP.

Turkish officials also say the PKK, which has been waging a separatist war in the country's southeast since 1984, is behind the influx of the Kurd refugees in an effort to defame Ankara.

"This situation stems from economic aspirations, not because they are politically persecuted here," Mr. Atacanli said.

However, Turkey has been widely criticised in the West for its heavy-handed approach on the Kurdish question, which has included the forced evacuation of hundreds of Kurdish villages in the southeast in the last few years.

## Turkey holds military manoeuvres in Aegean Sea

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey has begun fresh naval manoeuvres in international waters of the Aegean Sea in defiance of Greece, the foreign ministry announced here Monday.

"The exercises began last Friday and will continue for two, three weeks," ministry spokesman Sermet Atacanli told a news briefing.

"These manoeuvres had been planned and announced to the related sides in advance," Mr. Atacanli said.

His remarks came after Greece asked the United States to seek to persuade Turkey to "refrain from moves raising tensions" in the Aegean.

Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Yannis Kranidiotis asked newly appointed U.S. ambassador to Greece

Nicolas Burns to persuade Turkey to "adopt a less confrontational stance" in its relations with Athens, Greek sources said last Friday.

They said the Turkish manoeuvres would for the first time take place close to the Greek islands of Andros and Mikonos in the central Aegean, and near Icaria in the east.

But Mr. Atacanli said the Turkish manoeuvres should not raise fresh tensions with Athens, adding that Greece was also planning to hold military exercises in the Aegean in the next few days.

"As long as the sides take the necessary security measures, they have the right to conduct manoeuvres" in international waters of the Aegean, he said.

Turkey and Greece held rival manoeuvres in the Aegean and in over Cyprus in October and November despite calls by the U.S. for the two arch rivals to curb military activities.

Despite their joint NATO membership, Turkey and Greece are involved in a number of rifts over sovereignty in the Aegean and the Cyprus question.

The two neighbours came to the brink of war in January 1996 over the sovereignty of a handful of uninhabited Aegean islets, and only heavy U.S. diplomatic pressure prevented an armed confrontation.

Turkey also accused Greece of spearheading efforts to block its membership bid to the European Union.

## Top Chinese official tells visiting Iraqis he wants sanctions ended

BEIJING (AFP) — Senior Chinese official Qiao Shi Monday told a visiting Iraqi delegation he wanted an end to "prolonged" U.N. sanctions and reiterated Beijing's opposition to the use of force against Baghdad. The official Xinhua news agency said Mr. Qiao, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, had welcomed an Iraqi delegation led by National Assembly Speaker Saadun Hammadi, who is in Beijing to drum up support to get the sanctions lifted. "We express our profound sympathy to the Iraqi people for their sufferings from the prolonged sanctions, especially those of the women and children," Mr. Qiao was quoted as telling Mr. Hammadi.

"We hold that the sanctions cannot last long," he said.

"China holds that international conflicts should be settled peacefully and it opposes the use of force or the threat of force," Mr. Qiao added.

"We are ready to play a positive role in the United Nations and set forth proposals in the interests of the world and all the people," Mr. Qiao called for "a fair and reasonable solution as early as possible to the issues left over by the Gulf war, including the sanctions against Iraq, on the basis of the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Hammadi was quoted as briefing Mr. Qiao on the situation in Iraq, and as saying that Iraq was willing to develop its relations and

friendly cooperation with China.

The Iraqi parliamentary speaker earlier met Wu Yi, minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, Xinhua said. Mr. Hammadi left Sunday for visits to Beijing and Vietnam, an official told AFP in Baghdad. Flights in and out of Baghdad are banned under the sanctions in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Vietnam also supports a lifting of the sanctions, while Beijing has opposed the use of force against Iraq for its refusal to let U.N. arms inspectors into presidential palaces.

The sanctions cannot be lifted until the arms inspectors have eliminated Iraq's capacity to build weapons of mass destruction.

## Ailing Hamas leader to travel to Saudi Arabia for treatment

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The spiritual leader of the Islamist group Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, will go to Saudi Arabia next month for treatment of various ear ailments, a Hamas spokesman said Monday.

"Sheikh Yassin will go to Saudi Arabia for treatment after the Eid Al Fitr," the religious festival marking the end of Islamic Holy Month of Ramadan at the end of January, spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi told AFP.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, will have treatment in an attempt to restore hearing

to his one deaf ear and to end an ear infection which doctors fear could spread to his brain, Mr. Rantisi said.

He has applied to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for a passport, and the interior ministry "said it would attempt to give him a diplomatic passport which would make his travel easier," Mr. Rantisi said.

Palestinians holding diplomatic passports from the authority can move more freely through Israeli-controlled border crossings into the occupied territories.

Sheikh Yassin, who founded the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), spent eight years in an Israeli jail for links to terrorist attacks but Israel released him in October in a bid to patch up relations with Jordan after two Israeli agents were caught trying to assassinate a Hamas official in Amman.

Hamas, which has rejected the PNA's self-rule deals with Israel, has conducted a campaign of violence against Israel which has killed scores of people since 1993.

## Cornered by rivals, Netanyahu tries to regain initiative — analysts

By Luc de Baroche  
Agence France Presse

TEL AVIV — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with his parliamentary majority eroded and serious new political challenges on the horizon, is no longer trying to avoid early elections but rather to choose the most favourable moment to go to the polls, analysts said Monday.

The day after Foreign Minister David Levy and his centrist Geshet Party quit the government to protest at a planned austerity budget and the deadlock in the peace process, Mr. Netanyahu

rushed to push the spending plan through parliament before more cracks appear in his coalition.

Mr. Netanyahu claimed in a Sunday night press conference that he had a "stable" majority in parliament both to pursue his liberal economic reforms and to negotiate a "secure peace" with the Palestinians.

But at the same time his response to Mr. Levy's resignation had the ring of a campaign speech.

He denied Mr. Levy's accusations that his budget neglected Israel's poor, detailing planned investments to benefit disadvantaged communities. He also charged that the

political left, if it returns to power, would abandon Israel's security needs by ceding all occupied lands and returning the country to the untenable borders it had prior to 1967.

"Netanyahu knows that David Levy's resignation sealed the fate of his government," said Henni Shalev, political commentator for the Maariv newspaper.

"Sunday's press conference showed that Netanyahu intends to adapt. He doesn't want to be dragged into an election campaign, he wants to lead it," he said.

Analysts expected Mr. Netanyahu to gain approval of his 1998 budget in parliament

Monday despite some last minute haggling by coalition partners seeking additional funds for pet projects.

Without Mr. Levy's five deputies, Mr. Netanyahu has a majority of just 61-59 seats in the 120-member parliament but can also count on the support of two deputies from the far-right Mokedet Party.

A much tougher challenge will come when Mr. Netanyahu has to deal with U.S. and Palestinian demands to pursue implementation of signed peace agreements, notably a new troop withdrawal from the West Bank which is fiercely opposed by a number of ministers and govern-

ment legislators.

U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross is due here today to press for quick action on the peace front, including what Washington is calling a "significant" troop pullback.

Whether or not Mr. Netanyahu hopes to meet Israel's commitments — Mr. Levy said in his resignation speech that he doubted if the prime minister ever intended to carry out a new troop withdrawal — it is clear he no longer has a majority in his coalition to meet Washington's demands.

Nahum Barnea, political analyst for the Yediot Achronot newspaper, suggested Mr.

Netanyahu wanted to be forced into new elections by differences over the peace process rather than some domestic issue like the budget.

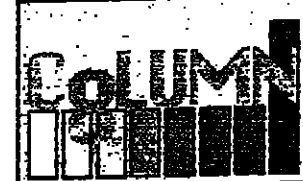
If the key election issue is Palestinian demands for an independent state in all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with Arab east Jerusalem as its capital, Mr. Netanyahu believes he can rally broad support from centre and right-wing voters by accusing the left of planning massive territorial concessions, Mr. Barnea said.

Under this scenario, Mr. Netanyahu could choose to call elections either over the interim troop pullback, which

Washington wants announced by the end of the month, or when the two sides open negotiations on a final peace agreement at some still unspecified date.

Washington has clearly decided to keep the pressure on Mr. Netanyahu by insisting that Mr. Ross carry out his mission this week despite the political turmoil in Israel.

The White House also announced Sunday that U.S. President Bill Clinton would meet Mr. Netanyahu on Jan. 20 and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat the next day, ostensibly to test both leaders' determination to pursue the peace process.



## 'Jackal' author says Hollywood film version is tacky

LONDON (AFP) — Frederick Forsyth, author of the classic thriller "The Day of the Jackal," says he is disappointed by the new film version of his novel. "I think it's very tacky," he moaned. "This new film isn't a remake, it's entirely different. You might just as well make an entirely new film and call it 'High Noon,'" the author said. And it seems you just can't get any decent bad guys these days, Forsyth complained. "The all-purpose KGB is rather down the tube now, everyone has done drugs to death, everyone has done the IRA to death and as for Hamas and Hizbollah, west of Haifa who cares?"

## Roman street cleaners clearing the way for Jesus — Pope

ROME (AFP) — Pope John Paul II met Rome's street cleaners Sunday and told them they were clearing the way for Jesus. The pontiff was accompanied by Rome's Mayor Francesco Rutelli on his visit to a crèche built by the cleaners, the city authority said. "The street cleaners are charged with clearing our city streets to permit us to walk to the Campidoglio [city hall], into the new year and toward Jesus Christ," he said light-heartedly.

## Fergie's half-sister is launched on the public

LONDON (AFP) — Alert at Buckingham Palace — the Duchess of York has a 17-year-old half-sister whose photographs were splashed across the front and middle pages of Monday's tabloid Daily Mirror. The paper describes Alice Ferguson, a statuesque 1.85 metres, as a stunning beauty and runs five double column photographs to prove it. Alice has not been seen in public since she was a bridesmaid at Sarah Ferguson's marriage to Prince Andrew in 1986. The Mirror has now dragged her out of obscurity and given her a makeover. Alice's fresh-faced looks have already caught the eye of a top modelling agency.

## Top chef opts for hamburger

NEW YORK (AFP) — The top cook at one of the city's most upscale restaurants confesses that on occasion the fancy menu is too rich even for him. "Sometimes I feel like a model who wants to wear jeans instead of a dress," Sontha Khunn, executive chef at Le Cirque 2000, says in Newsweek. "I enjoy going to nice restaurants, but sometimes I just like to eat a hamburger." Khunn, 46, says he overcame family objections to reach the top of his profession. "My family never understood it... In Asia, the cook is like a slave. The chef is not a star, just someone who is serving people. Cooking is not an art."

## Zsa Zsa laments part in 'The Beverly Hillbillies'

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Zsa Zsa Gabor, who made headlines by slapping a police officer in 1989, is tired of spoofing the incident and wants better roles. After seeing "The Beverly Hillbillies" film again, Gabor says she was miffed afterward and wished that she should have gotten more than a cameo playing the incident for laughs. "I should have had the part of the woman who is wooing Jed because she has a pet farm and I have a pet farm," Gabor says. "Of course, she calls it a stud farm, but I think of it as a pet farm. I could have rode in with a horse. That's the part I should have had."

Handwritten signature: "J. H. Smith"